- **Health/Science / B10**

Kids' Quiz: What's in a name?

- **Sports / A25**

Joe Lipa back in PBA as FedEx coach

- **Saturday Special / C1**

Jolina, young stars stress importance of education

- **News / A2**

FVR: I have nothing to do with John O case

- **World / A11**

US vows huge response to Iraq slays

PAGC clears press usec

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE PRESIDENTIAL Anti-Graft Commission reversed itself and ruled that the graft complaint it had filed against Press Undersecretary Carmen Suva regarding a supposed discrepancy in her Statement of Assets and Liabilities should be dismissed for lack of probable cause.

The Office of the President, through Execu-

PAGC/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Atenean tops bar exam

By Philip C. Tubeza

TAKING top honors for the 2003 bar examinations given last September is Aeneas Eli S. Diaz, a graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University Law School.

Diaz, a junior associate of the Villaraza & Angangco Law Office, got a grade of 88.5310 percent, and is one of four Ateneo de Manila students who made it to the top 10.

ATENEAN/ A20

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Saturday, April 3, 2004 ★★ 72 pages / 9 sections / vol. 19 / no. 117 P18

website: www.inq7.net

REGRETTING the death of Jennifer Gallando, President Macapagal announces she's taking full responsibility.

GMA apologizes for child's death

Probe of bungled shoot-out ordered

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Armand Nocum

THE GOVERNMENT has taken full responsibility for the death of a 4-year-old girl who was hit by a bullet during a shoot-out between government troops and suspected kidnappers in Navotas on Thursday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTF) and the Philippine National Police to "review their rules of engagement to avoid a repetition of this unfortunate event."

"The end can never justify the means, and lapses in police operations must never be tolerated," she said.

The President did not say if the NAKTF members involved would be suspended or sanctioned.

Jennifer Gallando was playing inside the family's shanty when she was hit by a stray bullet as a NAKTF team pursuing a group of suspected members of the Allan Balimbingan kidnap-for-ransom gang shot it out with the five suspects in a narrow shanty-lined street connecting Navotas with Manila.

The driver and five children on board a passing Nissan van were also hit by stray bullets. Also among the injured were a fifth suspect, the driver of a passing truck and his helper and a NAKTF officer.

"I acknowledge the accomplishments of the NAKTF and the Philippine National Police in the relentless campaign against kidnappers, but I am saddened by the fact that a 4-year-old girl's life was needlessly sacrificed in this latest incident," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

"The government takes full responsibility for this and will provide the necessary assistance to the innocent civilians who were injured in the clash," the President said.

She ordered an investigation "as to who would take responsibility for the death of Jennifer Gallando as well as the injury of six other children."

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the government would give compensation to the Gallando family although he did not know in what form or amount.

He said the President had extended her condolences to the Gallando family and would be attending the wake for Jennifer.

Bunye said NAKTF and the unit involved in the incident must first review their procedures to find out what went wrong.

"The President is expressing her sympathies to the family of the victim but I think the best measure of responsibility is seeing to it that this incident is not repeated," he said.

Bunye said NAKTF chief Angelo Reyes continued to enjoy the President's confidence despite the incident and recent allegations that Reyes himself was allegedly behind some of the kidnappings.

"The President is very convinced of the record of Secretary Reyes. His record will speak for itself and I believe Secretary Reyes can easily acquit himself of any of

GMA APOLOGIZES/ A21

Alunan blames gov't for Maynilad woes

By Philip C. Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

REJECTING charges that mismanagement led to its financial troubles, the Maynilad Water Services claimed that it had been burdened from the start with a "flawed system" when it took over the water services concession in 1997, according to documents provided to the INQUIRER yesterday.

In a memo he issued in June 2003, Maynilad's former president Rafael M. Alunan complained that Maynilad was undone by the flawed water distribution system in its concession area; incomplete and corrupted data about the concession; and employees with an "anti-privatization" mind-set.

He said this was aggravated by regulatory instability and government unresponsiveness to Maynilad's concerns.

Alunan in effect blamed the government for failing to ensure a stable regulatory and policy environment that Maynilad needed to deal with "extraordinary problems in its crucial years of infancy."

The company has had to defend its record following the adverse public reaction to a proposed compromise settlement between Maynilad and the state regulator, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, with which it is tied up in a legal dispute after Maynilad sought to return its concession.

The deal, under which the MWSS would take majority control of Maynilad through a conversion of the utility's unpaid concession fees to equity, has been widely criticized, mainly by opposition politicians, as a bailout of the politically influential Lopez family.

Maynilad, a joint venture between the Lopez Group's Benpres Holdings and the French-based Ondeo Services, won the 25-year concession to provide water and sewerage services to the western zone of Metro Manila when water services were privatized in 1997.

The Ayala Group-led Manila Water won the concession for the much smaller eastern zone.

Overwhelmed by financial and operational problems, Maynilad failed to remit concession fees to the government from 2001 and sought to terminate the concession in December 2002.

The two have since been tied up in litigation over the govern-

ALUNAN/ A20

Erap's toilet stirs long court debate

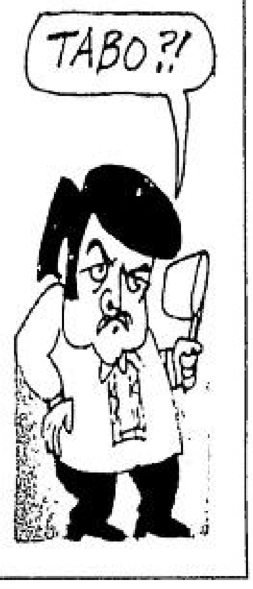
By Armand N. Nocum

GIVE him liberty or give him a toilet which flushes.

Ousted President Joseph Estrada, through his lawyers, has asked the antigraft court trying him for corruption to grant him his "human right" to a toilet bowl. Preferably one which flushes.

This sparked an almost two-hour debate between prosecution and defense lawyers, Sandiganbayan observers have called it "the great toilet bowl war."

ERAP'S/ A21



Gov't taking Janjalani seriously

By Gil Cabacungan, Alcuin Papa and Julie S. Alipala

MALACAÑANG is not about to dismiss fugitive Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani's boast that he has trained a long line of bombers who can hit targets in Metro Manila.

In Zamboanga City, a top military commander confirmed Janjalani had been recruiting new members but doubted the bandit chief could raise significant support.

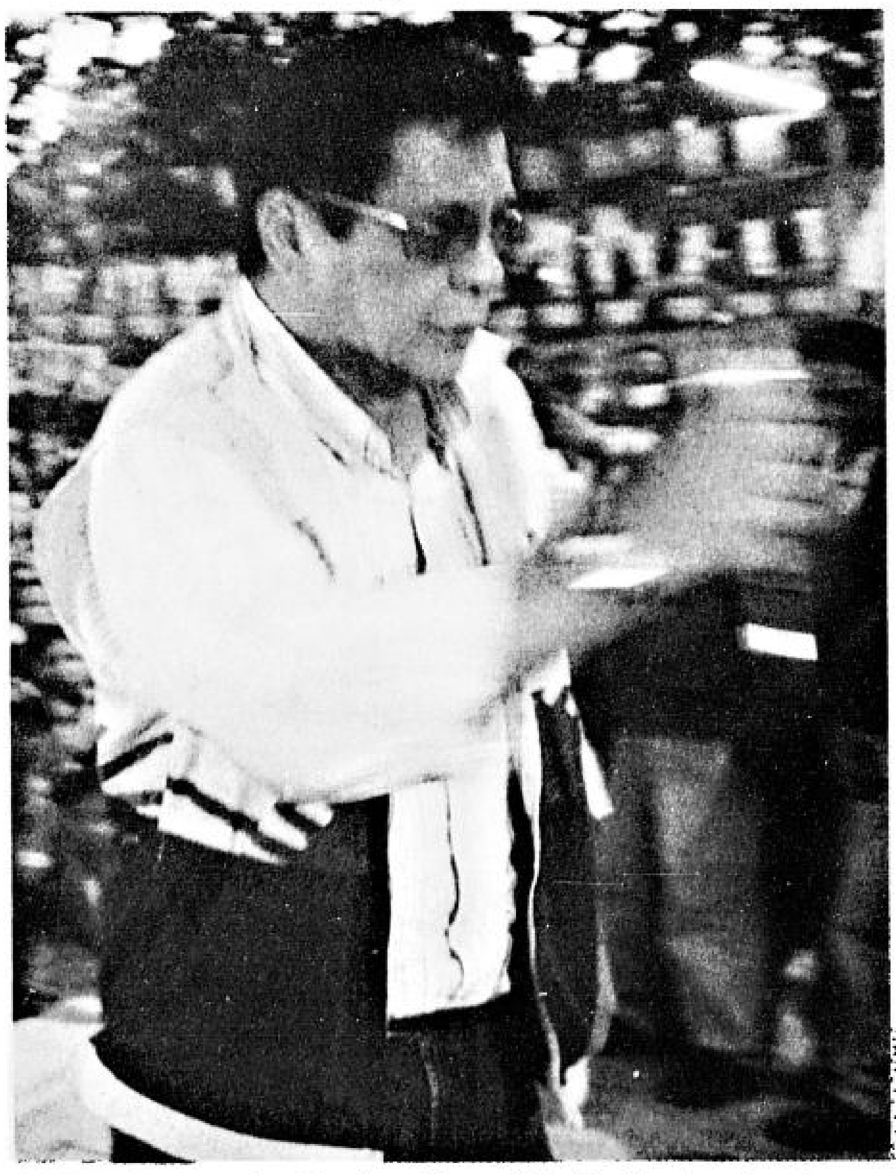
"We cannot totally dismiss Janjalani," Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters in the wake of Janjalani's claim that he had been personally training a long line of volunteer "mujahideens" for bombing missions.

"I cannot say with certainty that they are wrong or they have that much number, but we are now wide awake in metropolitan centers," Ermita said. "This is now a battle between 80 million Filipinos against a handful of troublemakers and terrorists."

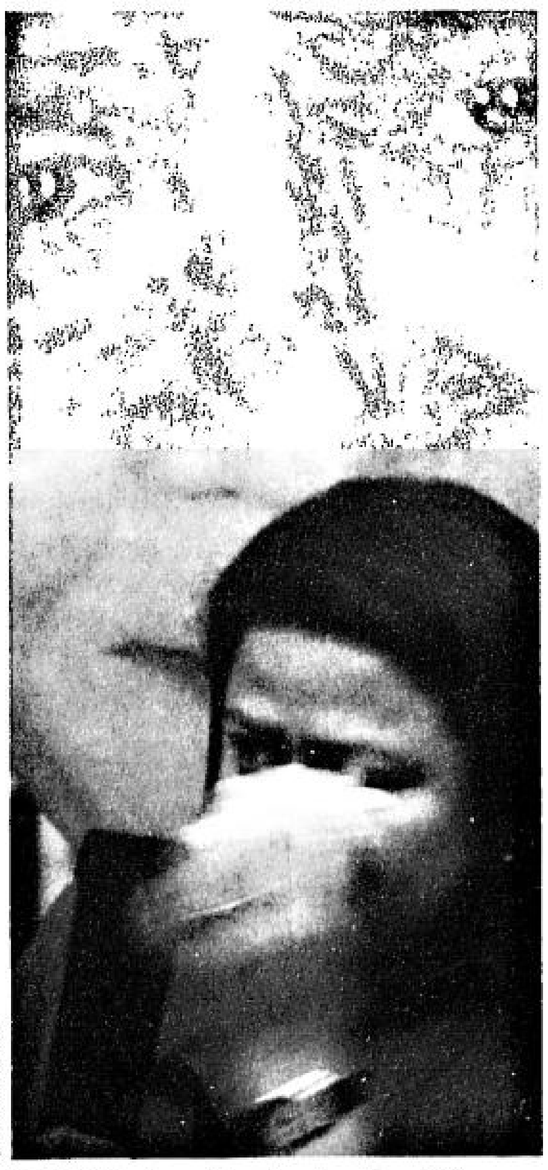
He said the government had given serious thought to Janjalani's statements considering his lofty status in the Abu Sayyaf, his training in Afghanistan, his involvement in the wars in Afghanistan and

GOVERNMENT/ A21

A comedy, KNP says of FPJ flap with reporter



ANGRY KING: Presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr. offers the microphone to GMA 7 reporter Sandra Aguinaldo during a campaign rally in Tigbauan, Iloilo. Poe's campaign manager, Tito Sotto, said it was nothing but "a comedy."



ACCUSED of stealing the show from FPJ, Sandra Aguinaldo of GMA 7 tearfully retreats on stage.

EDWIN BACASMAS

By Christine O. Avendaño

PASSI CITY—Allies of Fernando Poe Jr. are scrambling to explain why he berated a TV reporter the other day for supposedly interrupting him as he spoke at a campaign rally in a Tigbauan town.

The standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino left for Manila late Thursday night to attend to an "urgent" matter. *(See story on Page A6.)* His handlers said he was to return in time for the grand rally scheduled in this city last night.

Poe's spokesperson, Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, told reporters Thursday night that it was a mere "misunderstanding" between the movie idol and GMA 7 reporter Sandra Aguinaldo, and that he did not mean to embarrass her.

On the other hand, Poe's personal campaign manager, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, dismissed the incident as a "comedy" and an issue "no longer being talked about by the opposition camp."

In Manila, GMA 7 News and Public Affairs yesterday said that Aguinaldo was merely "carrying out her duties as a broadcast journalist" covering Poe's campaign, and that "she has done nothing for which she should apologize."

In Iloilo City, the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines (NUJP) and the Iloilo Press Club issued separate statements chiding the opposition presidential candidate.

"Poe's response showed once more a disturbing tendency to lash out at the media for inconveniences suffered in his quest for the country's top post," said Inday Espina-Varona, NUJP national vice chair.

Varona said Poe's claim that Aguinaldo was distracting his audience "does not wash."

"The presidential candidate is a certified show biz star, and one trained in the art of

A COMEDY/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2004

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FrontPage

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly over Mindanao..

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY ERIKA SARMIENTO, PDI RESEARCH/04/03/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

'I have nothing to do with it'

FVR says John O rape case a smear job but not by him

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IT WAS a demolition job, but he had nothing to do with it.

Former President Fidel Ramos yesterday sought to assuage the "insecurities" of administration reelectionist Sen. John Osmeña, saying he had nothing to do with the rape case filed against him by a male sex worker.

"I know nothing about it, and I would like to inform the good senator that I wish him well as an official candidate of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and K4 coalition," Ramos told reporters after attending a meeting of the Anti-terrorism Task Force of which he is adviser.

"The criminal complaint is Senator Osmeña's problem. He is scheduled to face a hearing, and I hope he can establish a credible defense because I wish him well," he said, adding there was obviously someone behind the public disclosure.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye and President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor also affirmed Malacañang's support for Osmeña, one of the senators running under the K-4 ticket.

There would be no junking of K-4 candidates, Defensor stressed. "Our problem is internal and we will iron that out immediately."

As chair emeritus of the Lakas-CMD, the major party in the K-4 coalition, Ramos said he had been campaigning for its candidates, including Osmeña.

"What is important is to find out who is the real culprit because obviously there is someone who is doing this," Ramos said, adding that he has better things to do like promoting the country as an investment haven.

OSMEÑA

RAMOS

Osmeña alleged that Ramos instigated the charges to remove him from the K-4 slate and bring in Heherson Alvarez who was earlier dislodged from the Lakas senatorial ticket.

Alvarez also chided Osmeña for dragging his name into the case as he defended Ramos, saying it was unthinkable that the former President would discredit an administration candidate. "His personal past and present is hounding him and I have nothing to do with it," Alvarez said.

The independent senatorial bet who resigned as secretary-general and national spokesperson of Lakas-CMD but remains Lakas vice president for Luzon, noted this was the second time Osmeña has hurled baseless accusations against Ramos.

Osmeña earlier alleged that Ramos had a hand in the 'hatchet job' on presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr. regarding his citizenship.

Alvarez reminded Osmeña that Ramos was a "K-4 key ally" that took him in despite criticisms the administration got for including former Estrada allies Miriam Santiago and Orlando Mercado in its Senate slate.

His differences with Osmeña were nothing personal but over ideology and principles, he said, adding that Osmeña was "one of the most successful traditional politicians. He opposed land reform because he has big landholdings in Negros. He's a closet Marcos apologist and is protecting his vested interests."

Recently, Alvarez also took Osmeña to task for claiming in a full-page newspaper advertisement that he was an anti-Marcos freedom fighter.

The ad was in response to the accusation of University of the Philippines President Francisco Nemenzo that Osmeña was to blame for the non-passage of Senate Bill 2587 calling for changes in the UP Charter.

Although admitting that Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, John Osmeña's cousin, was a comrade in the fight against Marcos, Alvarez said John Osmeña was never one.

"As leader of the overseas opposition movement while in exile in the United States, I had to straighten out Osmeña's claim that he fought the dictatorship," Alvarez said. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

Gov't to free 32 political prisoners

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Christian V. Esguerra

THE GOVERNMENT will release 32 political prisoners , including women and minors, starting next week as part of its ongoing peace talks with communist rebels in Oslo, Norway aimed at ending a 35-year-old Maoist insurgency.

In a statement from Oslo, chief government negotiator Silvestre H. Bello III said the 32 "alleged political offenders" will be released from April 5 to May 5 this year.

Bello said the government "continues to release alleged political prisoners as one of its confidence-building measures for the ongoing peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front to end the 35 years of armed conflict in the Philippines."

"We hope the peace talks would continue to move forward," Luis Jalandoni, chief negotiator of the NDF, yesterday told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. Jalandoni earlier accused the government of stalling the prisoners' release, thus, causing the delay in the negotiations.

The second round of formal peace talks in Oslo ends today.

The government noted that of the 121 alleged political offenders set for release in 2001, only 23 remain behind bars.

But Marie Hilao Enriquez, secretary general of the human rights group Karapatan, claimed there are 310 political offenders nationwide and that most of them were charged with murder and possession of firearms to prevent them from posting bail.

Among those who will be released are seven women, 10 minors and the sick and elderly, including Zenaida Llesis, alleged New People's Army secretary general who was pregnant when she was arrested in Pangantukan, Bukidnon on Aug. 5, 2002. Her baby was born with a hole in the heart.

Aside from the release of the political prisoners, the government also pledged to set aside P8 billion as compensation for human rights victims of the Marcos regime.

Government negotiators presented a resolution from the executive committee of the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council headed by Ms Macapagal "expressing the government's policy to leave a sufficient balance on the recovery of Marcos ill-gotten wealth for the compensation of the victims of human rights in the amount of P8 billion."

Jalandoni said the NDF panel now wants to segregate the amount into a "separate interest-bearing escrow account solely for the purpose of indemnifying" the victims.

"We just need to sharpen the custodial agreement between the government and the Philippine National Bank on Jan. 30, 2004," Jalandoni said.

Excluded from the list of those to be released are Donato Continente and Juanito Itaas who are serving time for their alleged involvement in the assassination of an American military officer in the late 1980s.

Also not in the list, said Jalandoni, are Eduardo Hermoso, Manolito Matricio, Ruben Balaguer, Gelito Bautista, Mario Tobias, and Jose Ungsod who are collectively known as the Mamburao farmers. They were arrested in 1998 for allegedly killing Michael and Paul Quintos a year before.

Jalandoni said the government made no commitment to release Continente, Itaas and the Mamburao farmers. But he said his counterparts agreed to take up the matter immediately in the peace talks. *With AP report*

Attack on Pinoys in Ireland assailed

THE PHILIPPINES yesterday condemned a racially motivated attack on two Filipino couples in Northern Ireland and urged authorities there to investigate.

The Filipinos said they may leave the hard-line Protestant town of Portadown after a youthful mob pelted their home Wednesday.

"We condemn this attack not only because the victims are Filipinos but because we abhor all forms of racism, what with more than 8 million Filipinos in foreign lands and thousands of foreigners residing in our country," President Macapagal-Arroyo said in a statement.

The mob threw a rock through the couples' living-room window. Other objects, including clay flower planters, were smashed against their walls. Last week, windows in the home were shattered in a similar attack.

The two women in the house both work as nurses at the region's Craigavon hospital.

Arroyo said the Department of Foreign Affairs would work with British authorities so other Filipinos there are protected.

Like other parts of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland's medical services increasingly rely on immigrants to fill many posts, especially nurses from the Philippines. AP

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IT'S 2004 OR BUST

Ping to quit politics in '07 if he loses

LACSON in Bicol: 'I'll retire if I don't make it'

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENTIAL candidate Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson has said his future in politics doesn't go beyond 2007 if he doesn't win the elections on May 10.

"It's either 2004 or I retire in 2007 if I don't make it," Lacson said on the GMA-7 talk show Debate. His term as senator ends in 2007.

Lacson made the statement in reaction to allegations that he'd eventually drop out of the presidential race in favor of actor Fernando Poe Jr., under a united opposition ticket.

One of the reported concessions for his withdrawal from the presidential race in favor of Poe was his endorsement by Poe in 2010 as the actor's presidential candidate if Poe himself wins the presidency this year.

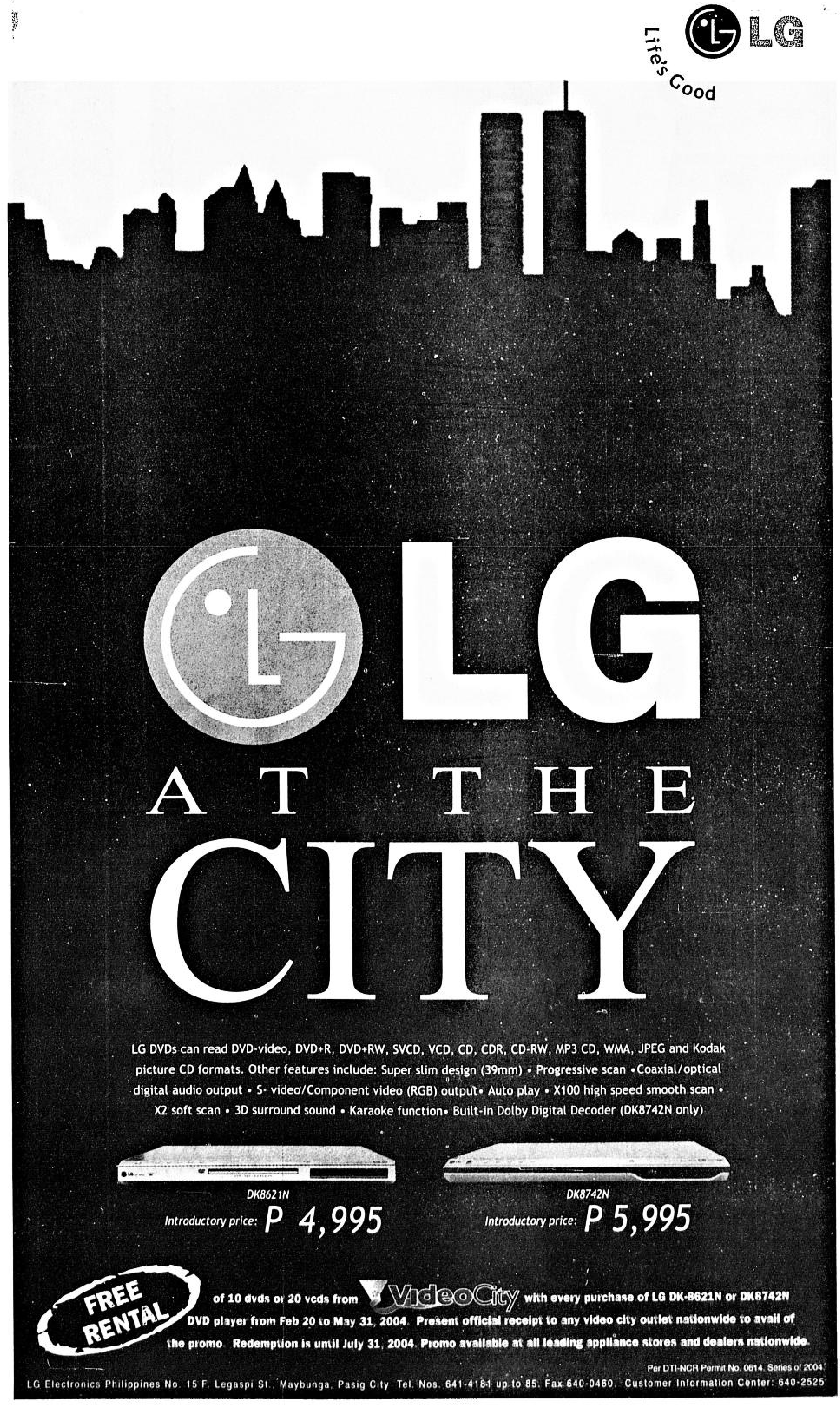
Lacson also said that if he were not running, there would be fewer candidates to choose from.

"(I would) not vote for a candidate who engages in double-talk, a candidate who is arrogant, a candidate who has no experience, and a candidate who is too nice," Lacson said.

Lacson has repeatedly said he is not interested in concessions being offered by Poe's camp for him to withdraw from the race.

He said he already turned down offers of reimbursements of his campaign expenses, the secretary-ship of the Department of Interior and Local Government and Poe's anointment of his presidential bid in 2010.

"There is such a thing as self-respect. I want to keep my integrity intact. I told Poe that if he wants to talk, we'll talk. But there will be no concessions," Lacson said.



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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, April 3, 2004
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Ezk 37:21-28
Gospel: Jn 11:45-57

Many of the Jews who had come with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw what he did; but some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees called the Sanhedrin Council.

They said, "What are we to do? For this man keeps on giving miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, all the people will believe in him and, as a result of this, the Romans will come and sweep away our Holy Place and our nation."

Then one of them, Caiaphas, who was High Priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all nor do you see clearly what you need. It is better to have one man die for the people than to let the whole nation be destroyed."

In saying this Caiaphas did not speak for himself, but being High Priest that year, he foretold as a prophet that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the scattered children of God. So, from that day on, they were determined to kill him.

Because of this, Jesus no longer moved about freely among the Jews. He withdrew instead to the country near the wilderness and stayed with his disciples in a town called Ephraim.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand and people from everywhere were coming to Jerusalem to purify themselves before the Passover. They looked for Jesus and as they stood in the Temple, they talked with one another, "What do you think? Will he come to the festival?" Meanwhile the chief priests and the elders had given orders that anyone who knew where he was should let them know so that they could arrest him.

Commentary

"Poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its saying where executives
Would never want to tamper" (W.H. Auden)

These lines are part of a poem written in memory of the poet W.B. Yeats, but I think Yeats was not so sure that poetry made nothing happen. He once had reason to wonder:

"Did that play of mine send out
Certain men the English shot?"

Sometimes words can be a substitute for action. But they don't always "survive in the valley of their saying," as Auden put it; sometimes they flood down from the mountaintops and shake an Empire. The Sanhedrin knew this. "The Romans will come and sweep away our Holy Place and our nation." So they were determined to kill him. "It is better to have one man die for the people than to let the whole nation be destroyed," said the High Priest, exactly according to Nietzsche's observation.

They were not the first, and they were not the last, to kill someone in order to silence him. Most of us don't go that far, but we go some of the way! An interesting list to compile: all the people I silence in subtle or unsubtle ways.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Rationale for plaintiff filing certificate of non-forum shopping—It is settled that the requirement in the Rules that the certification of non-forum shopping should be executed and signed by the plaintiff or the principal means that counsel cannot sign said certification unless clothed with special authority to do so. The reason for this is that the plaintiff or principal knows better than anyone else whether a petition has previously been filed involving the same case or substantially the same issues. Hence, a certification signed by counsel alone is defective and constitutes a valid cause for dismissal of the petition. In the case of natural persons, the Rule requires the parties themselves to sign the certificate of non-forum shopping. However, in the case of the corporations, the physical act of signing may be performed, on behalf of the corporate entity, only by specifically authorized individuals for the simple reason that corporations, as artificial persons, cannot personally do the task themselves. In this case, not only was the originally appended certification signed by counsel, but in its motion for reconsideration, still petitioner utterly failed to show that its Personnel Manager who signed the verification and certification of non-forum shopping attached thereto, was duly authorized for this purpose. It cannot be gainsaid that obedience to the requirements of procedural rule is needed if we are to expect fair results therefrom. Utter disregard of the rules cannot justly be rationalized by harking on the policy of liberal construction. [Citations omitted. [Justice Quisumbing, Second Division, Mariveles Shpyard Corp. vs Court of Appeals, G. R. No. 144134, November 11, 2003]

BY R.B. VERA

50 YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD

Cardinal Sin to build housing for the poor

By Blanche S. Rivera

RETIRED Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin is building a legacy that would last longer than his colorful term as archbishop of Manila.

Sin has pledged to establish the Cardinal Sin Village in Sta. Ana, Manila to mark the prelate's 50th anniversary as priest today. The village, which will rise on a two-hectare lot in Punta, would be a "gift" to the parishioners of the Puntais, Ina ng Laging Saklolo parish.

The compound will have 250 row housing units that would be built by the Couples for Christ through its Gawad Kalinga program. A learning center, to be named after the Cardinal, would also be built, along with a small chapel.

Arzobispado de Manila's information officer Peachy Yamsuan said in a statement that the Cardinal's friends here and abroad are providing resources for the creation of the other structures.

Sin was ordained priest in Roxas, Capiz on April 3, 1954 by Bishop Antonio Frondosa. He immediately ministered to the rural communities in the Panay mountains against the wishes of his superior, who later acknowledged the wisdom of his service.

SIN

"We pray that our merciful Redeemer will confirm your merits after your many exhausting years of labor and be Himself your solace and comfort in the years to come," Pope John Paul II said in his letter to the Cardinal.

The special greeting, written in Latin, was sent to the prelate on March 6, a full month ahead of Sin's anniversary. The Pope hailed Sin as the "good shepherd" of Manila, where Sin served for almost three decades.

Sin had long wanted to provide homes and a school for the poor parishioners in Punta, Sta. Ana. Most of the residents in the site are either workers in the nearby factories or families of overseas Filipino workers.

He recalled that the parishioners of the Ina ng Laging Saklolo were the first to adopt the Basic Christian Communities program of the Catholic church.

Sin will concelberate his anniversary Mass today with new Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Papal Nuncio to the Philippines Archbishop Antonio Franco. Manila auxiliary bishop and Cardinal Sin's private secretary Bishop Soc Villegas would deliver the homily.

Groundbreaking for the Cardinal Sin village will be done tomorrow afternoon in Punta, which is accessible through Mandaluyong, Makati and San Juan.

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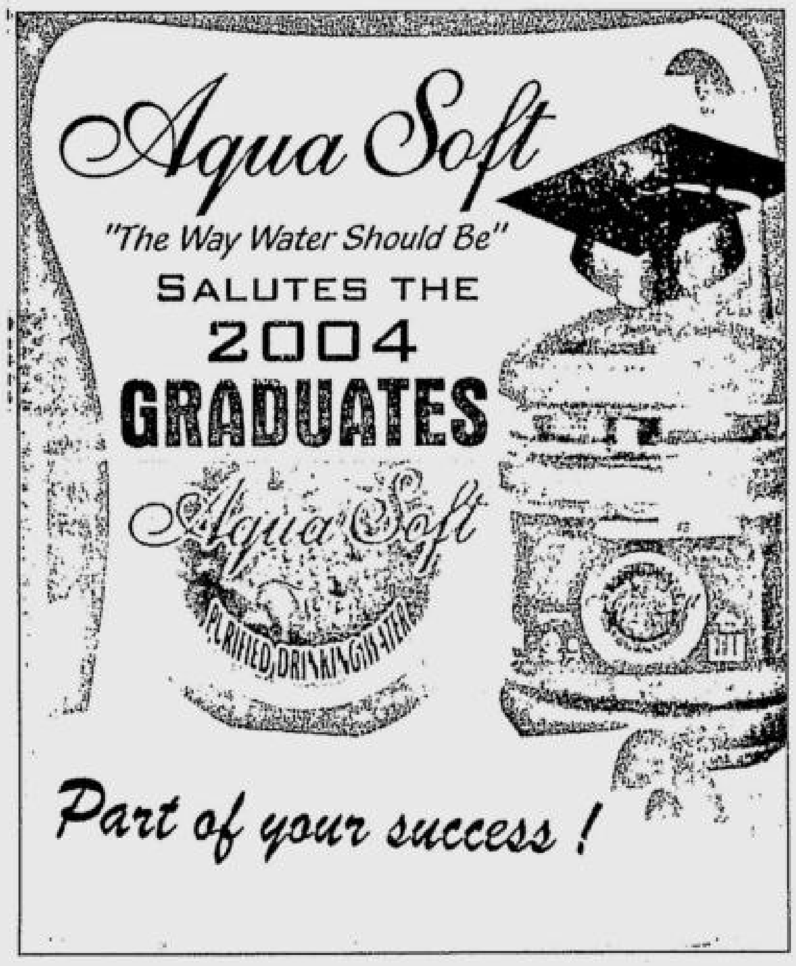
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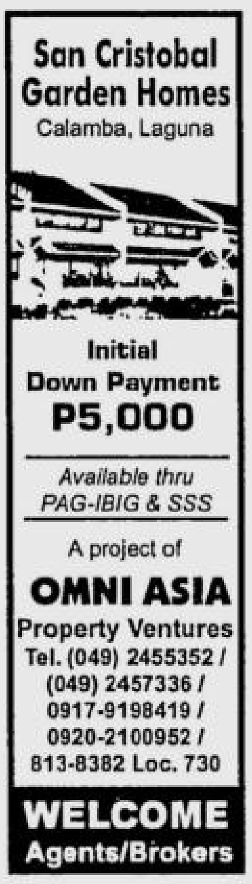
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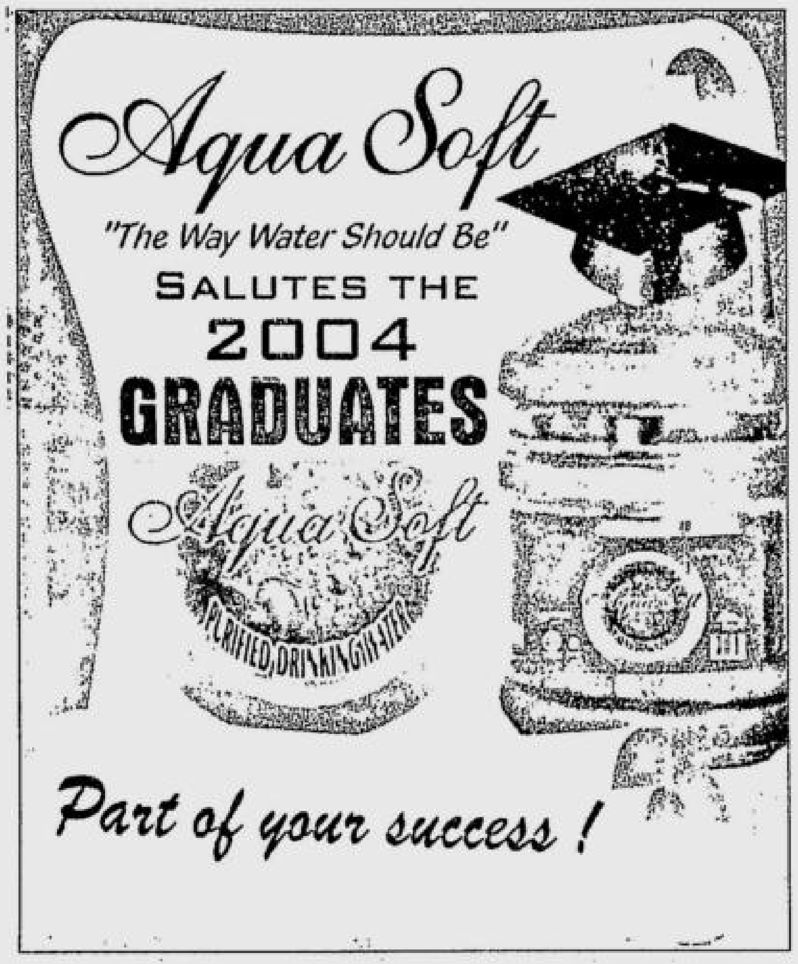

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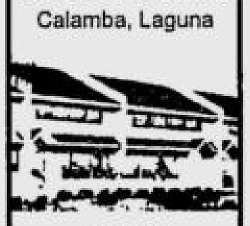

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FPJ, wife visit Iglesia leaders

By Carlito Pablo

FERNANDO Poe Jr. and wife Susan Roces yesterday morning visited the central temple of the Iglesia ni Cristo in Quezon City hoping to get the sect's blessing for the actor's bid for the presidency in the May 10 elections.

The visit came a few days after the controversial March 27 media interview in Cebu City by Rodolfo Reyes, media bureau chief of the Poe-led Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino. In the interview, Reyes agreed with statements that because of Poe's immense popularity, the much-sought bloc vote of the INC, as well as that of the El Shaddai movement, will just be icing on the cake of the actor's sure victory.

According to one account, the Poes were able to talk with INC executive minister Erano Manalo and his council of ministers. They were reportedly at the central temple between 9 to 9:30 a.m.

According to another account, the Poes were [illegible] to talk with one minister [illegible] INC.

The INC was reportedly "non committal" about the actor's request for support and agreed to meet with the actor on another day. The sect is said to command a solid vote of two million.

In a phone interview last Wednesday, Sen. Tito Sotto, Poe's personal campaign manager said that the KNP wrote both the INC and El Shaddai to assure them that the opposition considers their votes crucial in the May 10 balloting. He did not say who had signed the letter.

"We are counting on them to support us in the elections," he said.

Sotto said that the letter was sent early last week, a few days after Reyes gave his controversial remarks before reporters at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu City on March 27. In the informal talk, Reyes simply agreed when he was asked if the INC's command vote of two million was a key factor to a presumed victory by Poe.

"I don't know if they will be swing votes or not," he added.

It will be recalled that the INC and El Shaddai supported Poe's best friend Joseph Estrada in the 1998 elections. Estrada, who was popular among the masses because of his movie career background, won the 1998 presidential elections with a landslide vote.

When Sotto was interviewed in Bohol on March 28, he couldn't disguise his irritation over the Poe's media bureau chief's remarks.

"If we rely on armchair critics and analysts, we'll just be confused," Sotto said.

When asked if he counts Reyes among these armchair critics and analysts, he said: "*Kaya nga* (That is why)."

"(Reyes' comments) is not the analysis of the FPJ camp," Sotto said.

In the same March [illegible]iew, Reyes also said that tra[illegible]al political c[illegible]ically known to deliver votes, [illegible] not be crucial in the May 10 polls. Reyes soon realized his mistake and has since tried to clarify his statements, claiming that reporters took them out of context.

In a separate interview with reporters on March 28 also in Bohol, KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda disclosed that the INC has conducted a survey showing that Poe was way ahead of President Macapagal.

Maceda said that the INC survey covered one million respondents nationwide.

Rebs own solon's ambush

LUCENA CITY—Communist guerrillas yesterday claimed responsibility for the ambush of the convoy of Rep. Josephine Ramirez-Sato in Barangay Maligsog, Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro on Thursday.

But, Higom Maragang, spokesperson of the New People's Army Lucio de Guzman command operating on Mindoro island, clarified that Sato, who was unhurt, was not the target but the military vehicles in the convoy.

"The convoy was fired upon because of the presence of heavily armed uniformed soldiers riding in the vehicles. They were legitimate targets of revolutionary forces," Maragang said.

Maj. Jose Broso said Sato and his security escorts were ambushed by about 15 armed men while on their way to San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

DQ cases won't prosper- Ping

By N[illegible]dora

[illegible]PI CITY, Albay—Presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday said that the disqualification cases against President Macapagal-Arroyo would all be a collective exercise in futility given the lack of time for the Commission on Elections to decide before the May 10 elections.

"I don't see how the Comelec can resolve this before May 10. There's no more time," Lacson said in the wake of the Alyansa ng Pag-asa's filing of two sets of disqualification cases against the President before the election body.

Asked if he already thinks these are already an exercise in futility: "Yes, I would say so."

While the other disqualification cases remain pending despite the dismissal of the case filed by Fernando Poe Jr.'s senatorial bets Boots Anson-Roa and Amina Rasul, Lacson expressed belief that their purpose would all be for naught if they are not decided soon.

"(The other disqualification) cases are not yet closed. It's a continuing process."

Lacson early in the campaign exposed cases of government spending for the President's election bid.

He, however, decided to leave it to the public to judge Ms Macapagal in the coming elections rather than file the appropriate charges before the Comelec.

One such exposé is the government's alleged use of the proceeds of the Road Users' Tax from motor vehicle registration for the incumbent's Programang Pangkabuhayan ni Gloria that provides livelihood to street sweepers through cleaning the streets.

The program, however, has been criticized as a campaign tool for the President since the street sweepers wear uniforms bearing her name and signs are put up in almost all national roads nationwide proclaiming that this was her project.

On Thursday, Lacson welcomed the Supreme Court's junking of the disqualification case filed against President Macapagal by opposition senatorial bets Amina Rasul and Boots Anson-Roa.

"It's a welcome development, so we'll know who will get the people's mandate," Lacson said.

The senator believes it would be better if the public would be able to choose the next President from among all the present crop of candidates.

Lacson also added that the immediate resolution likewise cleared the air for the voting public to make a clearer choice come May 10.

"Had the case continued to hang over her head, it wouldn't clear up," Lacson added.

Allies say GMA will regain lead

By Cynthia D. Balana

PRO-ADMINISTRATION congressmen yesterday expressed confidence that President Macapagal-Arroyo would eventually regain her lead in the Social Weather Stations survey from actor Fernando Poe Jr. once the "harassment cases" filed against her are dismissed and the local campaign kicks off.

Rep. Vincent Garcia (Davao City) of the Nationalist People's Coalition and Rep. Prospero Pichay (Surigao del Sur) of Lakas said the President would soon beat Poe in the surveys because many of them have realized that the cases were filed by the opposition to harass the President.

Garcia said the start of the local campaign would help pad the President's lead since most of the local candidates came from the administration coalition K-4 consisting of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, Liberal Party, Nationalist People's Coalition and the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas.

He said that Poe's failure to explain his platform would make people switch to the President.

According to Garcia, the cases against Ms Macapagal were filed by three opposition "election laggards," some of which have been dismissed by the Supreme Court.

Garcia said the start of the local campaign would also swing the momentum to the President as the local contest for governor down to councilor was being dominated by the administration coalition's bets.

"Our voters have grown politically mature and very discerning. They now realize that the 10 cases filed by the opposition against the President were merely intended to harass the administration.

Pichay said the President has taken the high road of the campaign through civility and prudence.

"Instead of engaging in mudslinging, the President is sticking to issues and platform presentation, earning for her well-deserved esteem and support," he said.

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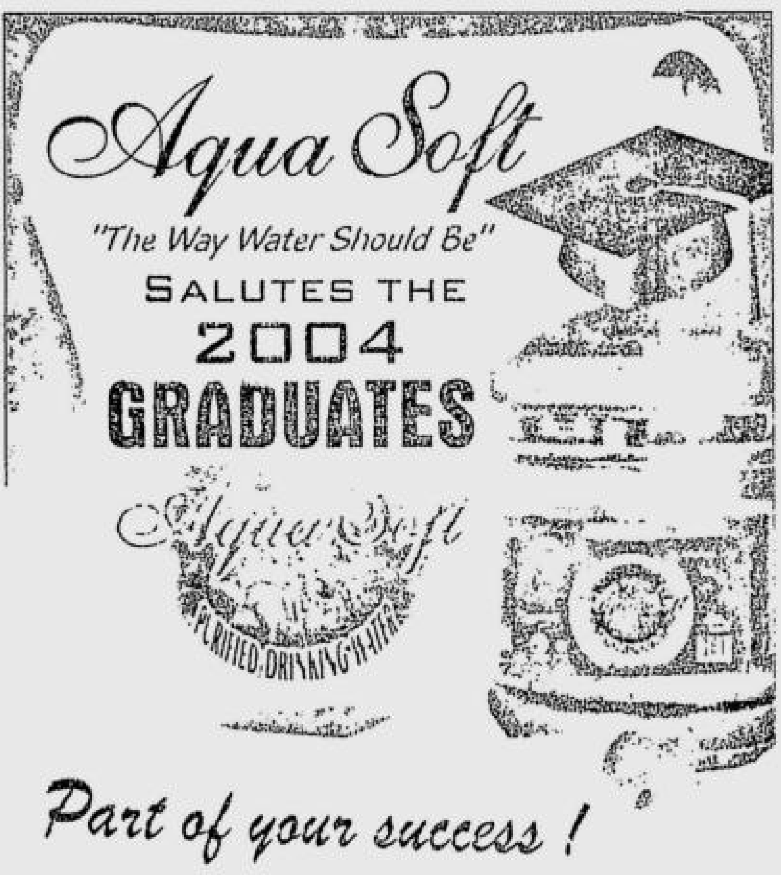

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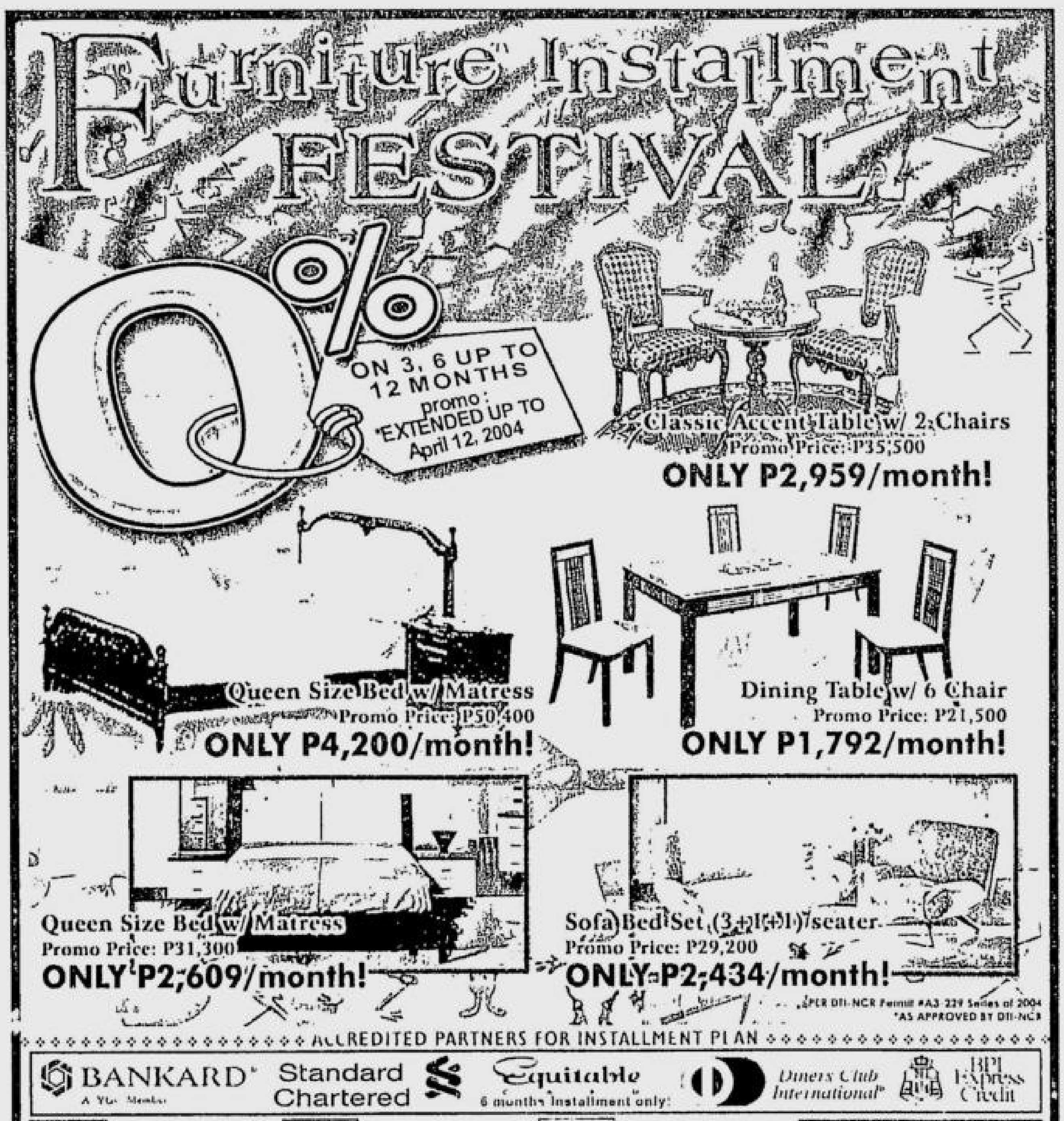

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Senatorial bet hales Comelec to SC over highway billboards

By TJ Burgonio

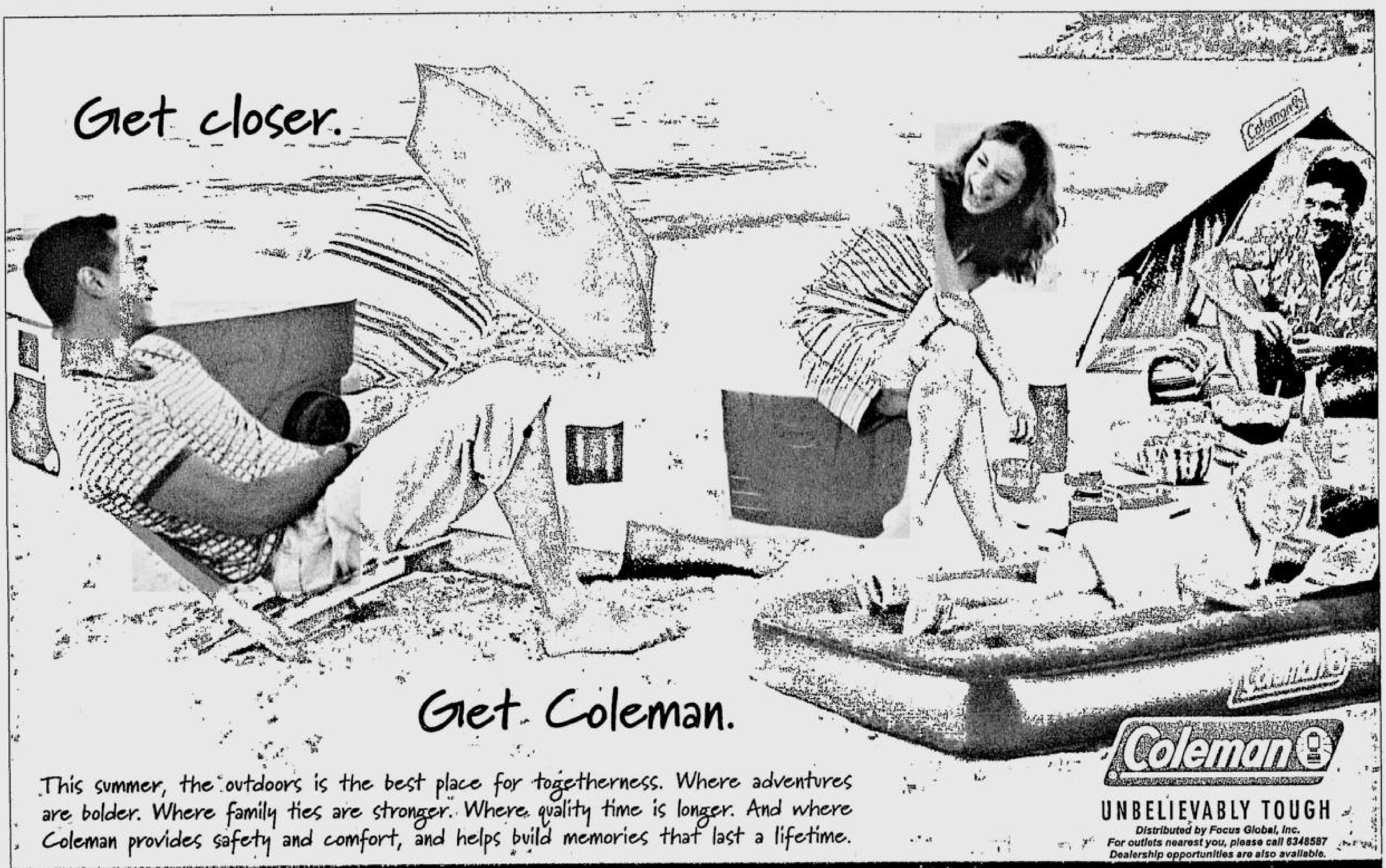
IS PUTTING up an advertising billboard with your face and name on it electioneering? Not so, says Alyansa ng Pag-asa senatorial candidate Francisco "Frank" Chavez.

Chavez yesterday petitioned the Supreme Court to enjoin the Commission on Elections from enforcing its ban on the display of a candidate's advertising billboard, saying it was unconstitutional. He said the billboards were promoting products, not his candidacy.

He said that Section 32 of the Comelec Resolution No. 6520, which provides for the ban, was unconstitutional, pointing out that the Fair Elections Act has repealed provisions in earlier election laws banning the use of billboards for election purposes.

The Comelec, in February, ordered Chavez to comply with Section 32 of its Resolution No. 6520, or be presumed guilty of premature campaigning in violation of the Omnibus Election Code.

Chavez has four billboards in which he is seen endorsing the clothing line 96° North, the plastic products of Konka, and the game and amusement parlors of G Box, most of which are erected along the North Luzon Expressway.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American sex offender to be deported

AN AMERICAN man convicted by a US court for trying to seduce a 16-year-old California girl will be deported from the Philippines as a risk to minors, immigration officials said Friday.

Filmore Salindo Talaroc, 38, was arrested Wednesday in his home in southern Iligan city, Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez said in a statement.

Talaroc was convicted in Turlock, California, in 1996, and served a six-month prison term for showing a 16-year-old girl nude pictures of himself with the intent of seducing her. He is also registered in California as a sex offender, immigration intelligence chief Faisal Hussin said.

He said Philippine immigration law prohibits the entry of aliens previously convicted of a crime related to moral depravity.

In a letter to Fernandez, US Embassy immigration attache Julian Briola said Talaroc's presence in the country could be "detrimental to the safety of Filipinos, particularly minor girls and boys."

Talaroc, originally from the Philippines, arrived in the country on March 20 to marry his Filipino fiancee, immigration officials said.

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50% TUITION SCHOLARSHIP for MASTER'S STUDENTS who are FILIPINO TEACHERS/ACADEMICIANS

Non-thesis master's programs offered for the CHED Faculty Development Program

Entrance exams administered in selected Jesuit schools in the provinces:
Pls. contact the following by April 6, 2004 for the First Semester entrance exam: Ateneo de Davao University (Guidance Office), Ateneo de Naga University (Institutional Testing Center), Sacred Heart School of the Society of Jesus(Sacred Heart Testing Service), Ateneo de Zamboanga University (Center for Testing & Measurement). Exam at Xavier University (c/o Office of the Psychometrician) is on April 2, 2004. Pls. check the website for the Second Semester schedule.

For further information, visit http://www.ateneo.edu or contact:
Graduate Services ❖ Ateneo de Manila University ❖ Loyola Schools ❖ Ground Floor, Xavier Hall
TELEFAX NO. (63 2)426-5937 ❖ TEL. NO. 426-6001 loc. 5141/5142 ❖ E-MAIL: grad@admu.edu.ph

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND SERVICE. FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD

President Gloria, are you serious about your EO 272?

We are very serious about the creation of the Social Housing Finance Corporation!

We believe this housing reform could significantly address the many problems of the urban poor in obtaining access to housing funds. Our advocacy for this housing finance reform dates back many years. Finally, **HUDCC's Mike Defensor promised its creation on April 2003, amidst the cheers of leaders of urban poor communities.**

When confronted in a meeting we had with him on December 18, 2003, **Mike Defensor again promised that you would sign an Executive Order by December and that the Social Housing Finance Corporation would be operational by January 2004.**

EO 272, which approved the creation of the Social Housing Finance Corporation as a subsidiary of the NHMFC and transferred the Community Mortgage Program to the SHFC, was finally approved on January 20, 2004. Since then, we have gone around urban poor communities to announce your EO 272. To date, it is not yet operational. We have instead been given the run around. For countless times, we have sat down with HUDCC and NHMFC officials to work on the required documents for setting up the SHFC. We did our part in looking for solutions to the numerous problems that emerged along the way. **Because we are very serious about the Social Housing Finance Corporation.**

On March 28, 2004, you announced at the Payatas Pulong Bayan that P500 Million will be provided to the SHFC as its initial fund and 6 percent for its operations. This could have been a good reason for the sector to rejoice, but your announcement has even raised more questions that the urban poor sector is now asking:

How can the SHFC receive the funds when it is not yet registered and HUDCC OIC Amado Bagatsing, Jr.
is hesitant to register it, being personally in disagreement with EO 272?

Why are the private sector representatives to the SHFC not yet nominated despite the HUDCC and NAPC's endorsements?

Why is the Department of Finance now being asked to study once more the feasibility of the SHFC?

We have waited long enough.

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS: ***LUZON***- BISHOP'S-BUSINESSMEN'S CONFERENCE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT• CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT (CCAD) • ECMC – NCR • ESI • FDN. FOR EMPOWERMENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY (FEEDER) • FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE (FDA) • FOUNDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE URBAN POOR, INC. (FDUP) • IDPG • INSTITUTE OF CHURCH AND SOCIAL ISSUES • INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ORDER • JFUPI • MUNTINLUPA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (MDF) • PHILSSA • PREDA FOUNDATION • SAC - LEGASPI • SACOP - PAMPANGA • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF PAMPANGA • TAO PILIPINAS, INC. • TULONG AT SILUNGAN NG MASA FOUNDATION (TSMFI) • URBAN POOR ASSOCIATES • URBAN POOR COLLOQIUM • ***VISAYAS***- CARITAS-CALBAYOG • ILOILO PEOPLE'S HABITAT FOUNDATION (IPHF) •JULIO & FLORENTINO LEDESMA FOUNDATION, INC. (JFLFI)• LIHOK PILIPINA • PAGTAMBAYAYONG FOUNDATION INC • PFI-CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY • ROXAS CITY URBAN POOR FEDERATION (RCUPF), INC. • SAN SEBASTIAN COMMUNITY URBAN LAND & DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (SASCULDEF), INC. • VISAYAS ALLIANCE FOR SOCIAL & POVERTY HOUSING, INC (VASPHI) •VISAYAS CMP DEV'T CENTER (VIETO) •WESTERN SAMAR DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC. •***MINDANAO***- ASSUMPTION PARISH OF DAVAO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (APSED) • COMMUNITY ORGANIZING - DAVAO EXPERIENCE, INC (CODE) • FEDERATION OF CAGAYAN DE ORO SHELTER AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES (FOCOSDA), CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY • FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH ORGANIZATIONAL UPLIFTMENT OF PEOPLE, INC. • GAWASNONG PAGBALAY, INC. • GRASSROOTS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION INC (GUIDE) • GUIDE FOUNDATION • HAGDAN SA PAG-USWAG FOUNDATION, INC. • HUGPONG SA KALAMBUAN-DABAW, INC. • KAGINHAWAAN DEV'T FOUNDATION• KATILINGBAN PARA SA KALAMBUAN, INC. (KKI) • KATOTOHANAN PAGKAKAISA AT SERBISYO (KPS). INC. • LIHUK KATAWHAN FOUNDATION, INC. • MAGI • MAGINHAWANG PABAHAY, INC. (MPI) • MINDANAO LAND FOUNDATION, INC. • MAINLAND DEV'T. CENTER• NEO-GENES PANAG-UNONG ASSOCIATION, INC. • ORO HOUSING SERVICE COOP • PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION, INC (PEACE) • PHILIPPINE AGENCY FOR COMMUNITY & FAMILY-MINDANAO CHAPTER• SAN LORENZO SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (SALORSED) • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER-DAVAO,DIGOS & TAGUM• TECHNOLOGY OUTREACH COMMUNITY HELP (TOUCH) • ZAMBOANGA HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, INC. (ZHRDI) • ZAMBOANGA URBAN POOR, INC. (ZUPI) • **PEOPLES ORGANIZATIONS** ***LUZON***- ALMANZA VILLE HOAI PH 1 • ALMANZA VILLE HOAI PH 2 • ANA MARIE HEIGHTS HOA • ANAK MARALITA HOA • ANAK NG NAGKAKAISANG SAM SA LUZON HOA • APITONG NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • BAGONG PAG-ASA NG TARLAK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • BALIKATAN SA DOS • BATASAN CORDILLERA BAGUMBAYAN HOA • BIGKIS • BISIG NG MAGKAKAPITBAHAY ASSN • BLESSED HOA • BLK III BAGONG SILANG HOA, INC. PH 1 • BLK III BAGONG SILANG HOA, INC. PH 2 • BMBI • BON BON BISIG PAGKAKAISA ASSN • BUKAL HOA • BUKLURAN FEDERATION • BUKLURANG MAGKAKAPITBAHAY HOA • CARMINA HOA • CEMENTO HOA • CHIKADEE VILLE HOA • CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S HOA • CONSUELO HOA • CUEVAS VILLE HOA • CUPANG TRAMO NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • DAKILANG PANGARAP HOA • DAMAZO HOA • DANGAL HOA • DEL PILAR HOA • DOÑA LUALHATI COJUANGO HOA • DREAMLAND HOA • DSOP - STA. ANA • DVHA KLP CHAPTER • EDNA ALVAREZ VISDA CMPD HOA • ENGR. ALFONSO D. GOSECO CMPD HOA • FAIRVIEW LILAC NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • FAMEALLAH HOMEOWNERS ASSN • FAMILY TEN HOA • GAYA-GAYA HOA • GEN. TINIO HOA • GLORIOUS HOA • GROUP 2 HOA • HILLSVIEW COMMUNITY ASSN • HINCA ASSN • HOME & LOT KAPITBAHAYAN ASSN • ILAYA SALINAS HOA • IPIL-IPIL HOA • JOSHUA • JOYFUL HOA • KALASAG HOA • KAPATIRANG LITA HOA • KAPATIRANG MAHIHIRAP NG PASIG • KAPIT-BISIG HOA (Banawa Property) • KAPIT-BISIG HOA (De Guzman Property) • KAPIT-BISIG HOA (Jacinto Property) • KAPIT-BISIG HOA (LCM Property) • KAPIT-BISIG HOA (Olympia To Property) • KAPIT-BISIG HOA (Padilla Property) • KAPIT-BISIG HOA (Pena Property) • KAPIT-BISIG HOA (Tan To Property) • KATUPARAN NG PANGARAP HOA • KAUNLARAN NG SAM HERNANDEZ CATMON HOA • KILUSAN NG KAPITBAHAY SA KANLURAN NG TUMASAN HOA (KKKT) • KING FISHER HOA • L.A. CRUZ HOA • LARKS HOA • LITA HOA • LIWANAG HOA • LORENZO HOA • MALIBAY ESTATE PORTION ASSN • MANATRA HOA • MANGGAHAN HILLS HOA • MANGGAHAN HILLS HOA • MANININDIGAN ANG GABAY NG INSPIRADONG KAPATIRAN ASSN. • MASIKAP HOA • MAVHAI • MILLENIUM HOA • MOUNTAIN VIEW VILLAGE • MSM HOA • NAGKAKAISANG MOLAVE HOA • NAMANA HOA • OPAL HOA • PABUHAY • PAMAYANAN HOA • PARUMOG HOA • PEOPLE'S COALITION FOR HOUSING RIGHTS HOA • PIGEON VILLE HOA • PINAG-ISANG DAMDAMIN SA PAMAYANAN NG MARIKINA HOA • PINAG-ISANG PALAD HOA • PINAG-ISANG TINIG NG PAYATAS ASSN • PLANAS HOA • PRECIOUS VILLE HOA • PUROK 20 HO AGRI-DEV'T & COM ASSN • RIVERVILLE HOA • RUBY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • SALINASVILLE 2 HOA • SALINASVILLE 3 HOA • SALINASVILLE I HOA • SAM. AT KABALIKAT NG MGA RESIDENTE SA KANEJIN HOA • SAM. NG MAHIHIRAP SA PNR HOA • SAM. NG MARALITA NG GULOD HOA • SAM. NG NAGKAKAISANG MAGKAKAPITBAHAY NG KABAGONG TAUHAN HOA • SAM NG PAGKAKAISA NG DUMPSITE CATMON HOA • SAM TUNGO SA KAUNLARAN NG KOMUNIDAD CATMON HOA • SAM. KABUHAYAN NG MAPULANG LUPA HOA • SAM. MAGKAKAPITBAHAY HOA • SAM. MAGKAKAPITBAHAY NG LIBIS SA KALOOKAN • SAM. MAGKAKAPITBAHAY NG MEDINA'S CMPD • SAM. MAGKAKAPITBAHAY SA PUROK 6 TUMASAN HOA • SAM MARALITA CATMON HOA • SAM NAGKAKAISA NG MALIKSI II • SAM NAGKAKAISA NG PUROK DOS • SAM PAGKAKAISA NG MAGKAKAPITBAHAY NG GENOVEVA HOA • SAM. PAMAYANAN NG MARALITA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • SAN AGUSTINE HOA • SAN JOSE ILAYA HOA • SAN RAFAEL RIVERSIDE HOA • SAN ROQUE HOA • SANCHOA • SITIO RUBY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN (SIRNAI) • SITIO STO. NIÑO ASSN • ST. DOMINIC VILLE HOA • STO NIÑO VILLAGE HOA • SUMMERVILLE HOA • SUNLIGHT HOMES HOA • SWALLOW VILLE HOA • T.C. ENCARNACION HOA • TANDOC PROPERTY URBAN POOR HOA • TINIG AT LAKAS NG NANINIRAHAN SA TALANAY • TINIG AT LAKAS NG NANINIWALA • TINIG NG NAGKAKAISANG HOA • TULIP RES. HOA • TULONG AT SILUNGAN NG MASA FOUNDATION • UGNAYAN NG NANINIRAHAN SA UNO • VASPH • VELARDE CMPD HOA • VERDANT HILLS HOA • VILLA ARANDIA HOA • VILLA MILAGROS HOA• VILLARAN HOA • ***VISAYAS***- AIRPORT VIEW HOA • ANTONIO LUNA PROGRESSIVE HOA (ALPHA) • BACK RUBBERWORLD ASSN • BAKHAW • BALANGANG KABUS NGA NAGKAHUGPONG • BALASAN • BANICA HOA • BASEY HOA • BAYBAY HOANC. • BERMUDA VILLE • BINITAYAN UP HOA PH 1 • BINITAYAN UP HOA PH 2 • BITOON HOA • BLISS ASSN • BRGY. AGUIT-ITAN HOA • BRGY. BAYBAY HOA • BRGY. CABALLERO NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • BRGY. FLORES • BRGY. HAMORAWON ASSN • CADELVA • CALUMPANG • CANAAN • CANEBA HOA • CAPOOCAN • CASUNTINGAN SITIO NANGKA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • CEBU PEOPLE'S POWER ASSN • CEBU ROCKY HILLS HOA • CHRIST • CLANVILLE HOA • CULAJAO HOA • DELA MONTAÑO HOA NEIGHBORHOOD HOA • KAMANGGAHAN LOWER TABOK UP ASSN • KASING-KASING • KAUSWAGAN U P ORG. • LAGTANG HILLTOP HOA • LANDSITE HOA • LATE ANDREA'S ESTATE ASSN • LITTLE TOKYO HOA • LUHODLUHOD ORG. WITH VISION & ENERGY (LOVE) • LUMULUPYONG BANIKANHON • M H DEL PILAR ZONE 1 • MADASIGON HOA. • MANANAGAT NGA MAINUSWAGON SA PUROK 3 (MANAMPUROK) • MANDAUE CREEKSIDE RESIDENT ASSN • MAPAINUBOSON • MARIVILLE HOA • MASBEL HOA • MEDALLA MILAGROSA HOA • MERCEDES PANGANIBAN HOA • MONGPONG MILAGROSA HOA • MT. ZION HOA • NAGKAHIUSANG LUMULUPYO SA SELMA CRUSHER HOA • POBLACION TOBOSO HOA • PROJECT JOSHUA HOA • PROJECT ROI HOA • PROSPERVILLE HOA • PROSPERVILLE HOA • PUNONG HOA • PUROK II PTA TAYTAY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • PUROK MAGAYON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • PUROK MALIMONG COM ASSN • PUROK PILIT COM ASSN • PUROK SUMAKWEL HORFLOW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • RIZAL HOA • ROSARIO VILLAGE HOA • SALVACION • SAM URBAN NG MARALITANG MAMAMAYAN SA ZONE 1 (SUMAMA) • SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA UP ASSN • SAN JOSE VILLAGE • SAN PEDRO • SAN POLICARPIO SHORELINE COM ORG. • SANCIANGKO RIVERSIDE HOA • SILAY BONIFACIO INTERIOR NEIGHBORHOOD HOA • SILAY INDIVIDUAL DEV'T OF LANTADIAN U P ASSN • SITIO MAHAYAG HOA • SITIO MINGOY HOA • SMILE HOA • SOMEWHERE HOA • SOUTHVILLE HOA • ST ANTHONY PLEASANT FAMILIES HOA • ST JUDE HILLTOP COM ASSN • STA FE HOA • STA FE NEIGHBORHOOD • STO ANGEL VIEW • STO NIÑO NEW ROAD HOA • STO. NIÑO COMMUNITY HOA • STO. NIÑO NEW RD • STONYHILL HOA • SUNRISE HOA • TABUCANA UNITED NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • TAIL ASH HOA • TAYTAY • TONGGOY UNITED PEOPLE'S ASSN FOR DEV'T (TUPAD) • UBANON HOA • UNICA HOA • UNITED LUSIMBA RES. ASSN • UNITED RENTERS WELFARE ASSN • UPPER KALUNASAN RIVERSIDE HOA • UPPER KALUNASAN RIVERSIDE HOA (UKRA 2) • UPPER KALUNASAN RIVERSIDE HOA (UKRA 1) • URBAN FAMILY • USWAG LOVE HOA • YELLOW BELLS HOA • ZARANDIN ESPERANZA HOA • ***MINDANAO***- AGUSAN CAGAYAN DE ORO LANDLESS ASSN • ASUNCION-MANGAYA-AY HOA • BABAK HOA • BAGONG BUHAY HOA • BAGUMBAYAN HOA • BALOY LANDLESS SEASIDE ASSN • BANGANGA CABANTIAN HOA • BEVERLY HILLS HOA • BITAUG BEACH HOA • BUGAC MA-A LANDLESS • BUMUCHOA • BUNHOA • CABAYUGAN CREEK SETTLERS ASSN • CABUPHOA 2 • CAVILMANOMAI 12 • CAVILMANOMAI 7 • CAVILMANOMAI 7A • CHARITY HOA • COASTAL • DELOS REYES TOWN SITE HOAI PH 1 & 2 • DOÑA MERCEDES PHASE 2 HOA • GLORIOUS MORNING ALLIANCE • GOLDEN MAON HOA PROJ. 1 • GOLDEN MAON HOA PROJ. 2 • GREENLAND HOA • GROUP SHA • HUABEE HOA • HUGPONG ALANG SA BARYO HANON OBLIGADONG LUMAD • HUGPONG HOA • INAHAN KANUNAY'NG PANABANG • JASMINE VILLAGE HOA • JUMBO BRIDGE HOA • KANIPAAN BIASONG UPA • KAR ASIA HOA • KASILAK 1 • KASILAK 2 • KAUSWAGAN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY • KO HOMESETTLERS UPA PH 1 • KO HOMESETTLERS UPA PH 2 • LAWIS STA. LUCIA UP HOA • LO HOA • LOWER CHICO HOA • LOWER LOMBOY UP HOA • LOWER MURICAY HOA • LUMHA • LUMIYAP - DIVISORIA HOA • MABUHAY LANDLESS ASSN • MAGSAYSAY FISHERFOLK VILLAGE • MAHARDIKAH HOA • MALINAWON 2 BRGY. EAST HOA • MANANAMA 2 • MANANAMA 1 • MARSHAI • MATI GROUPS • MAXIMA HOA • MEDIAVILLE HOA • MEGAVILLE • MOUNTAIN VIEW PH 2 • NEIGHBORHOOD HOA • NELIAVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN • NEW CORELLA HOA • OLINGAN RELOCATION UPA • ORVILLE HOA • OUR LADY OF ASSUMPTION HOA • PAGADIAN HILL HOA • PAGADIAN SECURITY BROTHERHOOD ASSN • PAGATPAT 2 UPA • PALARAN - MASWERTE HOA • PARADISE HOA • PEBHOA • PENAPLATA HOA • PHILBANKING HOA • PIZARRO HOA • POLO SUNSET BOULEVARD ASSN • POPULAR HOA • PUROK 8 RIVERSIDE SETTLERS ASSN • PUROK BOGANVILLA UPA • PUROK DAISY URBAN POOR HOA I & II • PUROK HILLSIDE HOA • PUROK KAIMITO UPA • PUROK KANIPAAN SETTLERS • PUROK LIBRA HOA • PUROK LIBRA HOA • PUROK MADASIGON UPA • PUROK MANGA UPA • PUROK NANGKA UPA • PUTIK UPAI • ROBESSO PHASE 2 HOA • SACRED HEART HOA PH 1 • SACRED HEART HOA PH 2 • SACRED HEART HOA PH 3 • SACRED HEART HOA PH 4 • SACRED HEART HOA PH 5 • SALVACIO PHE 1, 2, 3 • SAN ANTONIO HOA • SAN JOSE HOA • SAN JOSE NEIGHBORHOOD UPA • SAN MIGUEL HOA • SAN NICOLAS HOA • SAN PEDRO ALLIANCE OF CONCERN NEIGHBOR • SAN VICENTE • SAN VICENTE PULAWAN UPA • SANASA • SAPAHA 1 • SAPAHA 2 • SAPAHA 3 • SAVINA • SEASIDE HOA • SHULHAI • SINOLON • SODACO • SOUTHERN DAVAO URBAN POOR HOA • SQUID FISHERMEN BOLONG HOA • ST JAMES MILLENIUM VIL. 2 HOA • ST JAMES MILLENIUM VIL. 3 HOA • ST JAMES MILLENIUM VIL. 4 HOA • ST JAMES MILLENIUM VIL 5 HOA • ST JAMES MILLENIUM VIL • ST. JOSEPH • STO NIÑO MARAPANGI • STO NIÑO OF ZAMBOANGA CITY UPA • STO NIÑO WOMENS ORG• SUHA • SUPER ISLAND 2000 HOA • SUPETRAN PH 1 • SUPETRAN PH 2 • SUPETRAN PH 3 • SUTERVILLE COM. UPA 2 • TIBANBAN PH 3 • TUGBUNGAN UP HOA • UPPER DICAYAS RESETTLEMENT ASSN

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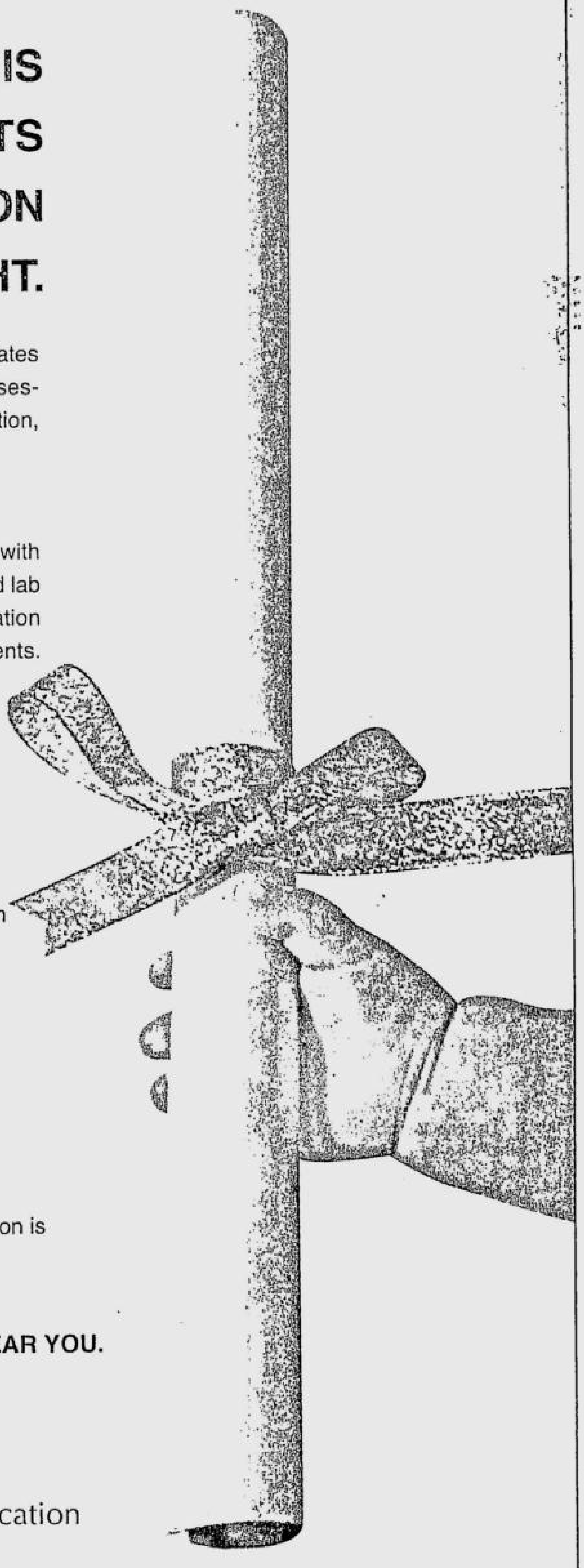

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MENSAHENG GABAY SA BAYAN SERYE BLG. 2

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
OWWA Center Bldg., cor. F.B. Harrison & 7th Streets, Pasay City

Kung kasapi ka ng OWWA —

Dobleng Benepisyo, Hustong Serbisyo ang Laan sa Iyo!

Ang OWWA, bilang pangunahing ahensiya ng gobyerno para sa pangkagalingan ng OFW, ay tumutugon sa pangangailangan ng ating mga bagong bayani.

Lalong pinaigting ang mga serbisyo nito at dinagdagan ang mga benepisyo para sa mga aktibong kasapi.

Mga programa at serbisyo

- ***Upgraded Insurance Coverage***

Mas pinalaki para sa pangangailangang pinansiyal ng mga miyembro.

	Noon	Ngayon
Accidental death insurance benefit		
Land-based	100,000	200,000
Sea-based	50,000	200,000
Natural death insurance benefit		
Land-based	50,000	100,000
Sea-based	25,000	100,000
Disability/dismemberment benefit	2,000	50,000
Total permanent disability benefit		100,000

- ***Voluntary Membership Program***

Bukas ang membership sa lahat ng OFW saan man sila naroroon. Sa halagang US$25 o P1,275 para sa buong panahon ng kontrata na hindi hihigit sa dalawang taon, miyembro ka na!

- ***Scholarship Programs***

May tatlong education at training benefits para sa sinumang miyembro o kanyang itinalagang benepisyaryo: ang Skills-for-Employment Scholarship Program para sa technical at vocational courses; Education for Development Scholarship Program para sa nagnanais kumuha ng kurso sa kolehiyo; at Seafarers' Upgrading Program, para sa mga seaman. Pinamamahalaan ng OWWA ang Congressional Migrant Workers Scholarship Program na pinopondohan ng Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

- ***Workers Assistance Program***

Bukas ang lahat ng tanggapan ng OWWA – Central Office, 15 opisinang rehiyunal, at 27 overseas posts sa 20 bansa — para sa mga serbisyong kinakailangan ng mga miyembro at ng kanilang pamilya, tulad ng paghahanap ng OFW, family at child support cases, psycho-social counseling, conciliation at representation services, medical at legal assistance, at outreach missions.

SINUSUBUKAN ni Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ang Tele-Ugnayan call center, ang proyekto ng DOLE-OWWA-PNB-Globe na nagkaloob ng 3 minutong libreng tawag sa mga pamilya ng OFWs sa kanilang mahal sa buhay noong nakaraang giyera sa Iraq.

NANGUNGUNA ang OWWA taun-taon sa pagsalubong sa mga umuuwing OFW para magbakasyon.

PRESIDENT Arroyo comforts the wife and children of one of three OFW bombing victims in Saudi Arabia last year. "The feeling of having the President and the government around" had awed the family.

Higit pa itong pinalawak ng Overseas Comprehensive and Social Services Package na tumitiyak sa kalusugan ng mga OFW. May walong doktor at pitong social worker ngayon sa walong iba't ibang destinasyon sa ibang bansa na katuwang ng 26 welfare officers sa paglilingkod sa mga OFW. Madadagdagan pa ang kanilang bilang ngayong taon.

- ***Community Organizing***

Laging nakaagapay ang OWWA sa iba't ibang OFW organizations. Sa ngayon ay mayroon nang 116 na samahan na binubuo ng 5,448 miyembro. Tumulong din ang OWWA sa pagtatatag ng lima pang bagong samahan ng mga OFW.

- ***Social Services at Family Welfare Assistance***

Reintegration Program. Mahalagang matulungan ang OFW sa pagpaplano ng kanilang kinabukasan, lalo na sa panahon na magpasya na silang bumalik mula sa ibang bansa. Bukod sa scholarship at iba pang training programs, may livelihood development para sa returning OFW at kanilang mga benepisyaryo. Katuwang ang National Livelihood Support Fund, maaaring humiram ng P200,000 (indibidwal) hanggang P1 milyon (grupo ng 5 OFW) para sa pagtatayo ng sariling negosyo.

Repatriation. Agarang repatriation ang sagot ng OWWA sa sandaling kailanganin ng sinumang miyembro.

- ***e-Card Issuance***

Patuloy ang pamamahagi ng e-Cards sa lahat ng kasapi na kanilang magagamit bilang ID, OEC, remittance, at discount card.

- ***Loan Guarantee Fund***

Family Assistance Loan. Sa pamamagitan ng Land Bank, ang kwalipikadong kasapi ay maaaring makautang ng hanggang P40,000 para sa madaliang pangangailangan ng kanyang pamilya.

Pre-Departure Loan. Kung kapos sa gastusin sa pag-abroad, maaaring makautang ng hanggang P40,000.

OWWA scholars, pag-asa at tagumpay ng OFWs

Ang mga serbisyo ng OWWA ay hindi natatapos sa pagkakaloob ng benepisyo sa mismong OFW. Kabahagi rin sa mga benepisyong ito ang kanilang pamilya gaya ng mga anak na binibigyan ng pagkakataon na makapag-aral ng libre.

Isa si Rowena Dudas sa mga napagkalooban ng scholarship ng OWWA. Siya ay anak ng isang mekaniko na nagtatrabaho sa Saudi Arabia anim na taon na ngayon.

ROWENA Dudas

JENALYN Tisbe

Tulad ng kanyang amang si Benjamin, si Rowena ay naghahangad ding mabigyan ng magandang buhay ang kanyang pamilya kung kaya't sinisikap niyang makapagtapos ng pag-aaral.

"Gusto kong matulungan ang aking mga magulang. Ipinagmamalaki ko na itinuturing na bayani ng bayan ang aking ama at bilang anak ng isang bayani, nagsisikap ako na maging karapat-dapat sa kanila ng aking ina," kuwento ng 18-anyos na dalaga.

Malapit nang makamit ni Rowena ang minimithi niyang tagumpay. Ngayong buwan ng Abril nakatakda siyang magtapos sa anim na buwang kurso mula sa isang computer school sa Maynila.

Ikinararangal ng OWWA ang pagkakaroon ng mga scholar na ang pagsisikap ay hindi lamang natatapos sa loob ng paaralan. Isa rito si Jenalyn L. Tisbe na benipisyaryo ng Congressional Migrant Workers Scholarship Program (CMWSP). Ang CMWSP ay programang pinamamahalaan ng OWWA na ang pondo ay mula sa Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Sa tulong ng nasabing scholarship, nakapagtapos si Jenalyn sa University of the Philippines-Diliman ng Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, na kanyang tinapos sa loob lamang ng 3 ½ taon.

Sa kasalukuyan, nagtatrabaho na si Jenalyn sa Philippine Health Insurance Corporation. Nagkaroon na rin siya ng pagkakataon na makapag-tutor sa mga estudyante ng Miriam College sa Global Resource for Higher Educational Attainment and Development Tutorials at sa iba pang tutorial institutions. Plano na rin niyang kumuha ng Master's degree sa Applied Mathematics at kumuha ng pagsusulit para sa Society of Actuary ngayong taon.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS UPDATE

Tumatanggap na ng application ang OWWA para sa mga scholarship programs nito para sa SY 2004-2005. Maaaring mag-apply ang sinomang kasapi o kwalipikadong dependent ng OFW. Makakakuha ng libreng application forms sa alinmang tanggapan ng OWWA. Maaari rin itong i-download mula sa DOLE website, www.dole.gov.ph. Ang deadline sa pagpasa ng application ay Abril 15, 2004.

Isang Kuwento ng Repatriation

"Salamat kay Pangulong Gloria, ako'y nakauwi"

Isang munting anghel ang kasama ni Saniya Jakaniya, 33, nang siya'y dumating mula sa Riyadh, Saudi Arabia kamakailan. Kalong niya ang isang taon na si Majid Rahsid – anak niya sa isang Sudanese na nakilala niya sa Saudi habang siya ay naninilbihan doon bilang domestic helper.

Ang kanyang kaso ay pag-ibig. Tumibok ang kanyang puso para sa isang tsuper na Sudanese. Lingid sa kaalaman ng kanyang amo ang kanilang relasyon hanggang sa ipagdalantao niya si Majid.

SINALUBONG ni Administrator Virgilio Angelo ang OFW na si Saniya Jakaniya at anak nitong si Majid Rahid matapos dumating ang mag-ina sa airport. Ang OWWA ang nangasiwa sa agarang pagpapauwi sa mag-ina.

Ang pangyayaring ito ang nagtulak sa kanya sa Bahay Kalinga, isang pansamantalang tahanan na pinangangasiwaan ng Kagawaran ng Paggawa at Panghanapbuhay at nagkakanlong sa mga manggagawa, karamiha'y kababaihan. Ang pagdadalantao ng walang asawa ay mahigpit na ipinagbabawal sa bansang Islam gaya ng Saudi Arabia.

Dito iniluwal ni Saniya si Majid.

"Maraming kababaihang OFW ang tumatakbo sa Bahay Kalinga upang pangalagaan ang kanilang buhay. Mapalad ako. Nagpunta ako doon upang bigyang-buhay ang aking anak."

Para sa may suliraning mga OFWs, ang Bahay Kalinga ay gaya ng tunay na tahanan, kung saan naibibigay ang kalinga at iba pang uri ng tulong gaya ng pagpapayo at pagsasanay ng kakayahan.

OWWA ang nangalaga kay Saniya habang siya ay nasa Bahay Kalinga. Pinagkalooban siya rito ng kanyang mga pangangailangan lalo na noong siya'y makapanganak. Nang lumakas at handa na siyang bumiyahe, inasikaso ng Philippine Embassy ang kanyang mga dokumento. Inako ng OWWA ang mga gastusin sa kanyang pagbabalik sa Pilipinas.

Ipinangako rin ng mga opisyal ng embahada, lalo na ni Labor Attache Manuel Roldan, na pagkakalooban ng visa patungong Pilipinas ang ama ni Majid.

Ang magandang balita: Susundan niya si Saniya sa Zamboanga City upang pakasalan at tuloy sunduin upang sa Saudi Arabia na manirahan.

Sa iba, ang pagpapauwi sa bansa kay Saniya ay maaaring pambihira, subalit sa OWWA, bahagi lamang ito ng karaniwang pagkakaloob ng tulong sa libu-libong OFW, na dahil sa hindi maiwasang mga pangyayari ay nahihinto sa pagtatrabaho sa ibayong dagat, kung kaya't kinakailangang bumalik sa Pilipinas. Sa mga OFWs na nasasadlak sa hindi kanais-nais na kalagayan, iniaabot ng OWWA ang kamay nito—at ibinibigay ang masayang bahagi: isang maligayang pagbabalik.

> ***"Sa nakalipas na tatlong taon, marami na akong nakilalang mga OFW at akin silang niyakap dahil sila ang kumakatawan sa kabutihan, kadakilaan, at kahusayan ng ating mamamayan. Patuloy kong itataguyod ang ikabubuti ng ating mga OFW at kanilang pamilya bilang tugon sa kanilang pagpupunyagi at sakripisyo para sa ating bayan."***
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US vows huge response to Iraq slays

A TELEVISION grab shows hands in the flames as a body of an American contractor burns next to an attacked vehicle in the volatile Iraqi town of Falluja, March 31. REUTERS

BAGHDAD—US troops on Thursday promised an "overwhelming" response to brutal killings in the Iraqi town of Falluja and vowed to hunt down those who shot, burned and mutilated four American contractors.

Marines took positions on the outskirts of the restive town west of Baghdad where the contractors were ambushed by insurgents on Wednesday and then set on by a crowd.

"Coalition forces will respond," the US Army's deputy director of operations Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt told a news conference. "They are coming back and they are going to hunt down the people responsible for this bestial act.

"It will be at a time and a place of our choosing. It will be methodical, it will be precise and it will be overwhelming."

Television footage of jubilant Iraqis mutilating the bodies recalled events in Mogadishu in 1993, when a crowd dragged the bodies of American soldiers through the streets, hastening the departure of US forces from Somalia.

A leaflet distributed in Falluja on Thursday claimed that the previously unknown "group of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin" had killed the Americans in response to the Israeli assassination of Hamas spiritual leader Yassin last month. It was not immediately possible to verify the claim.

Falluja was relatively quiet on Thursday, but residents said more bloody killings should be expected.

"The Americans may think it is unusual but this is what they should expect. They show up in places and shoot civilians so why can't they be killed?" Falluja shop worker Amir said.

US troops fired on demonstrators in Falluja last April, killing at least 15 people. Other residents have been killed since then and locals accuse US troops of firing randomly and using excessive violence during raids. They always vow revenge.

An Iraqi Governing Council member stressed that those responsible represented just a small minority of Iraqis but also encouraged US troops to think carefully about how to respond.

"In 1958, July 14th, some members of the royal family were killed and mutilated. Iraqis were ashamed for decades at this barbaric event," Samir Sumaidi said. "Now after this I feel that again Iraqis will hang their heads in shame."

Guerrillas near Falluja detonated a roadside bomb as a US convoy passed by on Thursday, wounding three soldiers. One Humvee left behind by American soldiers near the site of the attack was later set ablaze and looted by a crowd of Iraqis.

A roadside bomb killed five US soldiers on Wednesday in the same area, a hotspot for resistance to the occupation. *Reuters*

Saudis won't allow oil shortages

WASHINGTON—Saudi Arabia said on Thursday it would not allow oil shortages that would harm world economic growth, despite its support for production cuts through Opec, publicly criticized by the Bush administration.

"Saudi Arabia's policy is consistent. Number one: we will not allow any shortages in the market," Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, told reporters in a surprise appearance outside the White House.

Prince Bandar said he had just come from a meeting with US President George W. Bush, where he passed along a message from Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Abdullah.

Saudi Arabia, Opec's most influential member, was seen as leading a cartel move to cut production by about 4 percent.

The Bush administration criticized the action, after asking Opec to delay production cuts because of record-high US retail gasoline prices, which are making consumers howl.

"I have just passed a message from Crown Prince Abdullah to the president regarding the energy situation," Prince Bandar said. "The president and the crown prince have been in touch on this subject for a while now. Both leaders feel strongly that higher energy prices have a negative impact on the world economy."

Prince Bandar, who noted the oil markets have been behaving "in an unusual way," said Abdullah and Bush agreed to stay in touch.

The statement may lend some political help to Bush, who, in an election year, is facing criticism from Democrats that he is doing too little to stem rising gasoline prices.

Americans are paying record prices of about $1.76 per gallon, on average, to fill their gasoline tanks. The price jumps have come just ahead of the summer driving season, when US gasoline consumption hits its peak. *Reuters*

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WorldBriefs

After Yassin, an Arafat hit?

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon does not rule out killing Yasser Arafat, suggesting in an interview published Friday that the Palestinian leader was a "marked man." Sharon was asked by the Israeli daily Haaretz whether Arafat and the head of the Lebanese fundamentalist militia Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, might be on Israel's list of leaders to assassinate. "I wouldn't suggest either of them feels immune... Anyone who kills a Jew or harms an Israeli citizen, or sends people to kill Jews, is a marked man, period," said the Israeli premier. Sharon's thinly veiled warning comes after the March 22 assassination he ordered of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in a helicopter raid on Gaza City, Israel's highest-profile targeted killing since the start of the Palestinian uprising three and a half years ago. *AFP*

Bali bombers 'acted on Osama's fatwa'

KUALA LUMPUR—The Bali bombers believed they were acting on the wishes of terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden when they killed more than 200 people on Indonesia's tourist island in October 2002, a repentant Malaysian militant said. Bin Laden's call on Muslims to kill Americans was passed on to members of Southeast Asia's Jemaah Islamiyah terror network by two of its leaders, Hambali and Abu Bakar Bashir, Mohamed Nasir Abas told private television station TV3 in an exclusive interview. Both Hambali and Abu Bakar Bashir issued the fatwa (religious edict) from Bin Laden which says all Muslims must defend themselves and take vengeance for the actions of Americans, because they have wronged, or killed civilians everywhere," he said. Hambali is now in US custody after being arrested in Thailand last year, while Abu Bakar Bashir is to be released from a Jakarta prison on April 30 after the supreme court halved a three-year sentence for immigration offences and document forgery. *AFP*

Japan pacifism fading, says envoy

TOKYO—Japan is casting off the pacifism that dominated its post-World War Two security debate but the shift need not be feared either by America or Japan's Asian neighbors, US Ambassador to Japan Howard Baker said on Friday. "I believe Japan is undergoing a reexamination of its own image of itself. It has now moved out of what I would call the pacifist era dictated by the constitution and is acting in ways more consistent with the second largest economy in the world," Baker told a small group of journalists. Japan, one of the United States' closest allies in Asia, is sending around 1,000 military personnel including 550 ground troops—with a strictly non-combat remit—to help rebuild Iraq, its biggest and riskiest mission since World War Two. The dispatch marks a milestone in a shift away from a purely defensive military posture toward a larger international role, a change urged by many US policy makers. But critics say the deployment violates pacifist Article Nine of the Constitution, which renounces the right to wage war and, if strictly interpreted, even rules out a standing army. Debate on revising the constitution—once taboo—has picked up steam, with both the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its main opposition rival seeking to draft their own proposals for amendments by 2005 and 2006, respectively. *Reuters*

Rice to testify publicly on 9/11

WASHINGTON—US national security adviser Condoleezza Rice will testify publicly on April 8 before the Sept. 11, 2001, commission in an attempt to counter bombshell charges that President George W. Bush failed to make terrorism an urgent priority before 9/11. Responding to heavy political pressure from both Republicans and Democrats, the White House made an abrupt about-face on Tuesday and agreed to allow Rice to testify publicly and under oath after previously insisting she only speak to the panel privately. A main area of questioning for Rice is expected to be claims by former US counterterrorism chief Richard Clarke that Bush ignored an urgent al-Qaida threat before the 9/11 attacks and was fixated on Iraq. *Reuters*

Argentines protest crime surge

BUENOS AIRES—Relatives of kidnap victims led 130,000 Argentines late Thursday in a candlelight march in the capital to protest the authorities' failure to protect the public from crime. Protesters marched to the congressional buildings with cries of "Justice! Justice," in one of the largest demonstrations since democracy was restored in Argentina in 1983. The Rural Society, grouping major landowners and farmers, called the protest after one of the most recent kidnap victims, 23-year-old engineering student Axel Blumberg, was murdered March 24. Investigators are now looking at the suspected involvement of police officers in the incident. *AFP*

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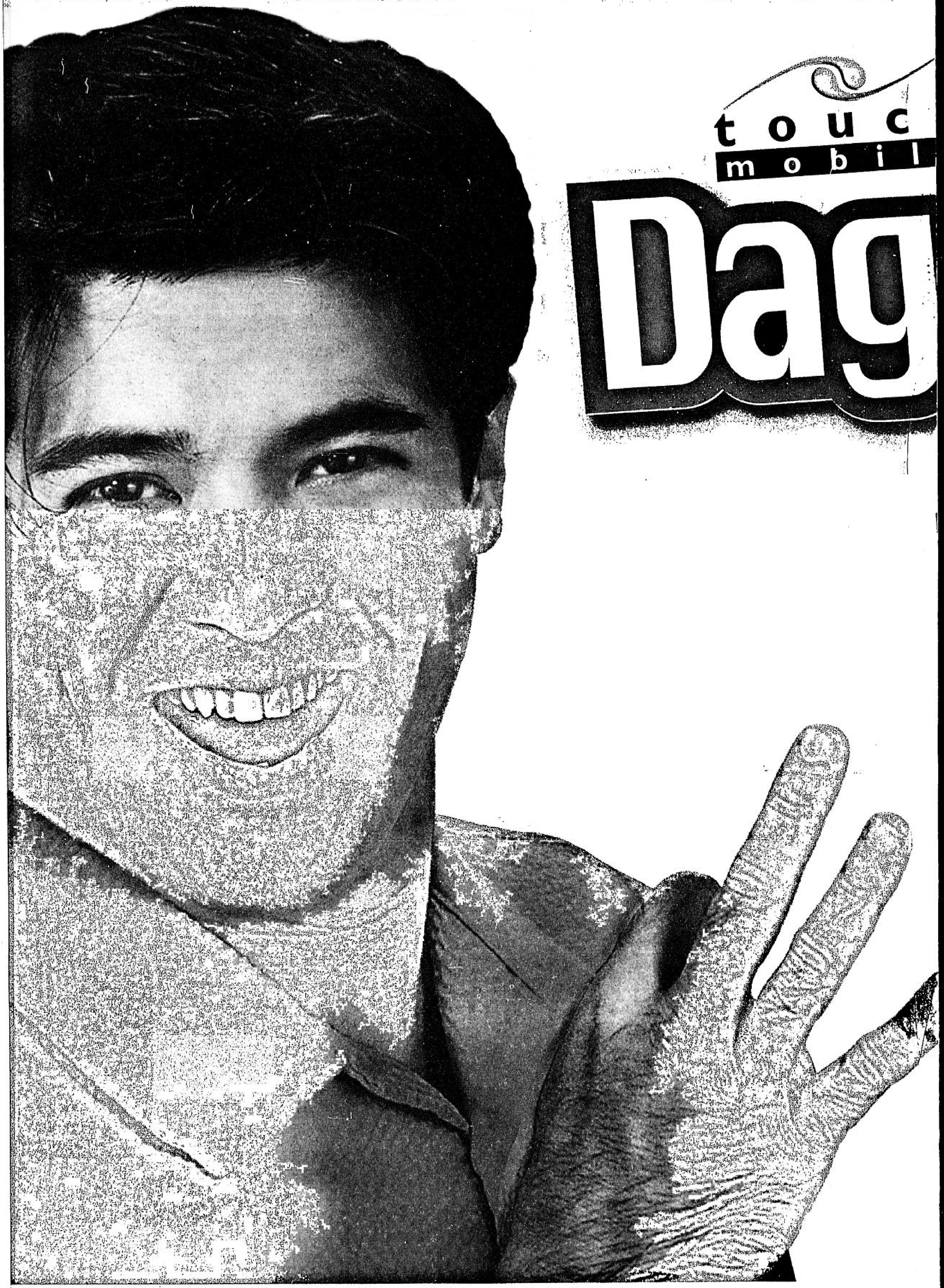
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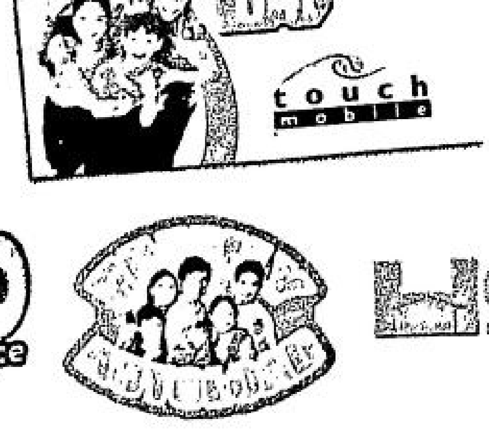
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Insulting language

EDITORIAL

TONE the campaign rhetoric down. Perhaps it would be too much to expect the likes of ex-senator Francisco Tatad to discover nuance on the hustings, but we should expect more from other candidates. We are not talking merely of celebrity endorsers like Dolphy, who admitted he had been carried away when he filled in the blanks of an old Visayan joke and called the President an idiot. We are talking about candidates expressing themselves on sundry issues, and using insulting language.

Last Wednesday, when a major power outage at the Naia Centennial Terminal overwhelmed the flight schedules of Philippine Airlines, several thousand passengers were inconvenienced. All told, over 50 flights were delayed, including those of opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. and his candidates. Because they could not use a private plane in time, Poe missed the first day of a three-day campaign swing in Panay.

To hear Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda talk, however, the Naia blackout could have been, or may have been, or was most likely, or was in all probability, designed to stop Poe from reaching Iloilo that day. That night, Maceda was all over the network news, sagely speculating on the real causes behind the power outage. (He was also available as a news source on another topic, defending Sen. John Osmeña against the rape charges filed by a male prostitute.)

Does anyone in his right mind believe that an incumbent administration would engineer a technical malfunction at the country's main airport at two in the morning, and in the process drive thousands of potential voters to frustration, merely to prevent a presidential rival, with his own private plane, from enplaning several hours later?

Maceda is insulting the people's intelligence, and he knows it. No stranger to being on both sides of a divide, he used weasel words to imply a fact, without committing any evidence.

Another KNP senatorial candidate, Amina Rasul-Bernardo, used insulting language when the Supreme Court struck down the disqualification petition against President Macapagal-Arroyo that she and fellow candidate Boots Anson-Roa had filed before it. "The Supreme Court clearly avoided the issue. We can't blame them. But we thank the three brave and patriotic justices who voted to hear our side. Sadly, they're too few," Rasul said.

In other words, Rasul implied, the three justices who voted not to dismiss their petition were patriots acting in the public interest; the rest, presumably, were too craven, too weak, too un-brave, to withstand pressure from Malacañang. (That is what Rasul's transparent "We can't blame them" means.)

Does anyone in his right mind think the Supreme Court justices succumbed to political pressure on a disqualification case against Ms Macapagal but not on a similar case against Poe? Rasul is insulting the people's intelligence. (Contrast Roa's understated, and thus more sympathetic, reaction to the high court ruling.)

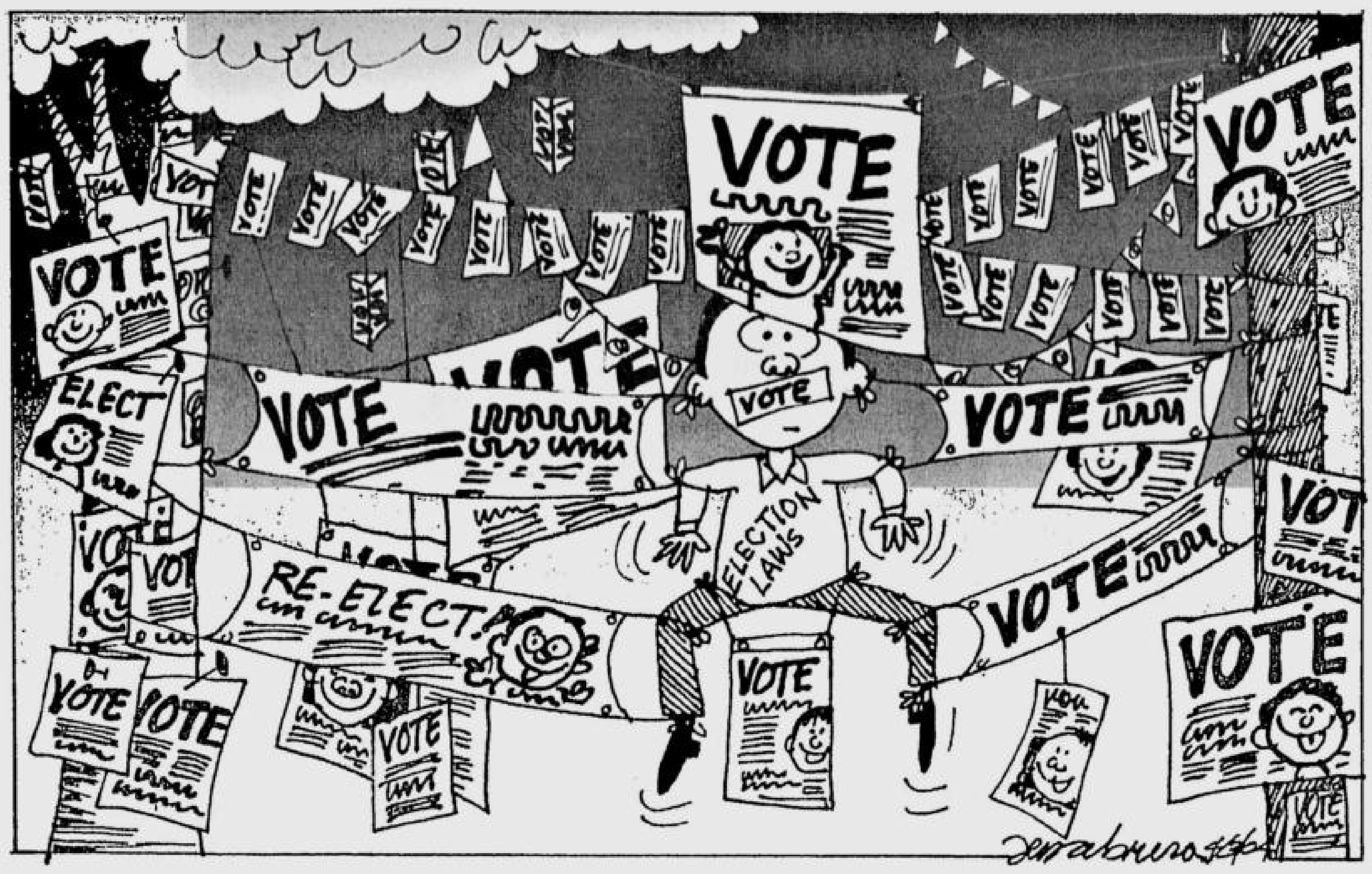
But the opposition does not have a monopoly on the unthinking or irresponsible use of language. On the same issue—her disqualification for her alleged misuse of government resources in her campaign—President Macapagal crossed the line herself.

"I would rather go to jail than stop serving the people," she said earlier this week. "Since when was public service an electoral offense?"

The statement made for a dramatic sound bite, except that where Ms Macapagal should have tread carefully, she rampaged like a bull. (Besides, does anyone really believe she would rather go to jail?)

It is a citizen's legitimate right to question whether, say, the use of a presidential photo on a national health insurance card is an act of governance or already a campaign gesture. (The Supreme Court asserted this right, but admitted it didn't have the jurisdiction.) Legitimate right, legitimate question. The President's overly dramatic statement implies there were no two ways about it; the insurance program and her photo go together.

Does anyone in his right mind think otherwise? The President is insulting the people's intelligence.



The high and the mighty

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

ORDINARY citizens like us in Merville are no match against the powerful airlines that have been oppressing us all these years. They have invaded our airspace, polluted our environment with their noise, intruded on our repose, interrupted our conversations, disturbed our schools, and impaired our hearing.

I have written no less than five articles in this column about this aerial aggression against the residents of Merville and neighboring communities. We have protested the abuses of these privileged airlines that awake us almost every day as early as 5 o'clock in the morning and annoy us the rest of the day without accountability or even only apology. How are they able to do this? Or am I too naïve to ask?

On complaint of the residents of our village, Noli de Castro, while still a private newscaster, gave us an opportunity to ventilate our problem through his television program. We showed that the noise created by the airplanes was way above the normal and allowable levels. We stressed that it was particularly harmful to our children, especially those studying in the schools operating not only in Merville but also in other neighboring villages. But the airplanes continued to arrogantly roar above us, and still do.

Two years ago, Sen. Loren Legarda arranged a meeting between then Air Transportation Chief Adelberto Yap and me for a possible solution to our difficulties. Sen. Joker P. Arroyo, chair of the committee on public welfare, looked into the matter also. Sen. Manuel Villar, whose City of Las Piñas was also adversely affected, introduced a bill to regulate airplane noise in our area. Then Rep. Roilo Golez and his present successor, Rep. Eduardo Zialcita, both introduced resolutions for the investigation of our complaint. Nothing so far has happened to alleviate our problem, which has in fact worsened.

The airlines causing this noise pollution are Air Philippines and Cebu Pacific. They are the culprits that have been enjoying the protection and coddling of the Air Transportation Office, which has over these many years allowed their transgressions.

The ATO had limited their flights over our village and surrounding subdivisions only from 10 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon. We were not completely satisfied with the regulation but accepted it just the same, knowing that the airlines had to make a living too. And so we stopped complaining. Air Philippines and Cebu Pacific both agreed to the flight schedule and solemnly promised to comply with it.

But as liberal as the concession was to the airlines, they have decided not to abide by it. They are flouting the prescribed schedule almost every day, including Sundays, when many residents are entitled to sleep longer without the intrusions of the noisy airplanes. At 7 o'clock on a Sunday morning, as many as eight planes from either or both of the airlines flew in quick succession over our place and awakened many of our neighbors. It was a bad way to start the day.

Air Philippines and Cebu Pacific can use the airport now servicing Philippine Airlines but they say they would consume more aviation gasoline and increase their air fare to the prejudice of their passengers. They have also refused to moderate the noise of their airplanes through the use of hush kits that cost about P1 million each. They say the expense would have to be passed on to their customers, who might give their patronage elsewhere.

So these affluent airlines would rather continue to impose on us than lose their valuable business.

What about us? Are we not entitled to some protection also? Are the earnings of these prosperous airlines more important than the comfort, convenience, and especially the health of the people they molest with their insolent airplanes? The compulsions of commerce should not outweigh individual rights, but the new head of the ATO, like his predecessor, does not agree.

We complained successively to the Ramos administration, the Estrada administration, and the Macapagal administration, but were consistently ignored. We called the attention of the Senate to the violation of the flight schedule agreed upon between ATO and the airlines, but also to no avail. Our leader in this cause, my *compadre* Semito Alparce, has become deaf from the airplane noise, but the government is still turning a deaf ear to his protests.

I cannot believe that one minor office in the executive department can be as insolent with the suggestions of the Senate as the haughty airlines the ATO is protecting. Air Philippines and Cebu Pacific appear to be among the "untouchables" that can operate their business at will and with the blessings of the government even if they violate the rights of their helpless victims.

We in Merville and the other affected subdivisions may not have the money to contribute to the campaign funds of the candidates, but we do have a considerable number of votes that we can cast for or against them, depending on how they will deal with our problem. This is no threat but only a reminder. Elective officials are supposed to represent the interests of the voters, not of affluent companies whose primary objective is only profit. I hope the candidates understand this.

A national treasure

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

AFTER LISTENING to Nene Guevara give her perspective on the fiscal challenges the country faces, I am convinced that she is a national treasure. In almost 30 years in public service, starting as a tax researcher with the National Tax Research Commission and ending as finance undersecretary under 10 finance secretaries/ministers (from Cesar Virata to Bert Romulo, with a short break when she was forced to resign during Erap's administration—Lucio Tan allegedly asked for her head), she has served her country with a competence that would be highly prized (and priced) in the private sector, and a selfless commitment that is all too rare in the public sector.

If there is anything that she doesn't know about Philippine public finance, it is not worth knowing. She is a walking encyclopedia—not just the theory but the practice. And if she has lapses of memory, her files are readily accessible in a *baul* she keeps in her bedroom (I've never actually seen it, but she jokes about it). Those who have followed her career will agree that if her recommendations over the years had been followed, the country would not be in the fiscal mess it is in.

The fiscal medicine she prescribes (the forum, on the most important problem of the incoming president was jointly sponsored by BusinessWorld and Action for Economic Reforms) was labeled "Otso-Otso Thoughts On the Deficit," in an apparent attempt either at humor, or at trying to "sex it up." But it packs a punch nevertheless.

The diagnosis of Guevara, together with UP School of Economics Dean Raul Fabella and Prof. Noel de Dios (FPJ's media team, in a name-dropping exercise, listed him as an FPJ adviser, but then spoiled the effect by describing him as an industrialist, instead of the eminent economist and author that he is) all agreed that there is indeed a fiscal "crisis": as indicated by a decreasing tax effort ratio, leading to a burgeoning debt—70 percent to 120 percent of GDP depending on whether we are talking about the national government's or the consolidated public sector's (i.e., including government corporations and local governments)—as well as the inability to progress on any other development front due to lack of resources.

The figures, Guevara adds, should lead the new administration to the obvious: Tax Elasticity or the response of tax collection to increases in income has gone down from 1.62 percent in 1996 to 0.37 percent in 2000. Which means that in 1996, a one percent increase in income led to a 1.62 percent increase in tax collections whereas in 2002, a one percent increase in income led to only a 0.37 percent tax revenue increase. In short, tax collection now hardly increases or benefits from GDP growth.

Why? Guevara believes that part of the reason is the government's strategy of exempting "growing" sectors (e.g. telecommunications) from paying taxes. This has to be reexamined, because it allows these "preferred industries" to be free riders—they don't have to pay for the costs of roads, police, armed forces, etc.

Then, there is the system of "tax credits." Guevara points out that the true sense of the word is that a taxpayer is given credit for taxes that he has paid in advance. But not here (thanks to Congress), where tax credits are given even if the taxpayer has not paid any tax! And made the tax credits negotiable instruments! Given Filipino ingenuity, tax credit scams were inevitable.

Another possible explanation for the decreasing tax elasticity is that people have joined the "underground economy" or have used non-payment of taxes to express their disgust over corruption and lack of governance. Tax avoidance is a way of getting even with a dishonest and unjust system (my thoughts on this is that the tax evaders are just trying to rationalize their self-serving actions).

On a micro-level, she points to corporate tax revenues as the weak spot: As a percentage of GDP, they have been cut almost in half—2.0 percent in 1997 to 1.1 percent in 2000. And notes that the share of non-dutiable (exempt) items has gone up to 65 percent. Also, there is the leakage from the self-employed: for every P10 collected from a fixed income earner, only P1 is collected from a professional.

Can these be fixed? That's the joy of Guevara's presentation: except for the indexation of sin taxes which requires legislation, everything needed to fix our fiscal problem is already available for use by a determined president—at hardly any financial cost.

Increase the tax base? Use student volunteers to map places like Divisoria, and compare the enterprises listed in the yellow pages with those in the tax rolls. Increase revenues from corporate taxes and the self-employed? Impose a ceiling on deductions, the presumptive income tax (minimum income tax levels for professionals), taxes on fringe benefits, the minimum corporate income tax. Get rid of incompetent/rent-seeking government employees? Civil Service rules state that if an employee gets an unsatisfactory rating in two successive rating periods, he can be removed. Etc. Etc.

Guevara says that for the president to succeed, what is also needed is a consistent fiscal policy, a finance secretary who understands public finance and an end to a system where the BIR commissioner and the trade secretary are virtual finance secretaries. I say that there is one other necessary condition for fiscal success: the next president should use Nene Guevara's expertise to the hilt.

FPJ's temper

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE CONFRONTATION between opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. and GMA Network reporter Sandra Aguinaldo was partly witnessed by the entire nation on TV, and it will doubtless hurt FPJ, as it reinforces whispers about his brusque behavior and volatile temper. I was trying to get an update on the Negros Occidental political situation that day and my sources were all agog over the berating episode in next-door Iloilo.

Aguinaldo claims to have climbed up on stage while FPJ was addressing the crowd, in order to get a good crowd shot for GMA Network's "Saksi." But apparently FPJ resented the distraction her presence caused, and he berated her for it. Thrusting the mic at her, he asked her in a loud voice whether she wanted to do the speaking instead; then, venting his anger by boxing a concrete wall, FPJ walked out. The stunned reporter broke into tears, which was seen on the cameras, and in the next scene, FPJ's running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, was seen talking to her. She later recounted that Legarda and FPJ's main handler, Sen. Tito Sotto, both advised her to apologize to FPJ "to finish the matter," with Sotto opining that Aguinaldo tried to steal an "*eksena*" from FPJ. She defiantly refused to apologize, however, as she insisted she did no wrong.

* * *

That episode would be doubtless viewed by FPJ's critics as a sample of arrogance—could it be that all the hoopla about his being "Da King" has gone to his head? It also shows his terrible temper, which was vent for the nth time on a media person, but this time on a female practitioner—these are two no-no's for politicians. If FPJ behaves that way now, how much more when he is clothed with the awesome powers of the presidency? The question analysts are asking now is, is FPJ self-destructing?

But what's more surprising is Legarda's attitude: one would expect that instead of coaxing Aguinaldo to apologize, the former broadcaster would have explained to FPJ what she was trying to do, which was a "stand-upper." Instead, Legarda looked too eager to placate "Da King."

* * *

The seeming self-destruction for FPJ comes at a time when his camp seems beset by many problems. This include physical fatigue (and the punishing summer heat) to which FPJ seems unaccustomed, the shortage of funds, the wranglings between various factions that are handling the candidate and his campaign, and his continuing refusal to join the debates, which is costing him votes. It is no wonder that more and more political analysts, the latest being the CitiGroup, predict that FPJ would lose the race to GMA, albeit the race remains tight between them.

* * *

The court case brought against Sen. John Osmeña by a male call boy has to be regarded as part of the black propaganda that's victimizing candidates from all sides in this campaign season. On the other hand, I cannot buy his story that former President Ramos is behind the dirty tactic implicating him. *Naku naman*—I cannot believe FVR would resort to such low blows. But the guy who's smiling through this whole episode is independent senatorial candidate Heherson Alvarez, whose campaign, badly hampered by lack of funds, has suddenly been thrust into prominence. Osmeña's focusing attention on a recent photo of Alvarez's hands being raised by FVR and Speaker Joe de Venecia has now become worth millions in publicity for Alvarez.

* * *

K-4 analysts like to stress that President Macapagal's relative political weakness in the Metro Manila-Southern Tagalog area would be offset by her strength in the Visayas, where she is conceded even by her political enemies to have the decided edge. Recently, however, there seems to be trouble for her in Negros Occidental. The Marañon brothers, Gov. Joseph Marañon and Rep. Alfredo Marañon, who heads the Nationalist People's Coalition in the House, were until recently firm GMA supporters, inasmuch as the NPC was in alliance with Lakas in the region. In fact, the strategic importance of NPC-dominated Negros to GMA's campaign is evidenced by her going there three times in the past 15 days, the only President to have done so. First she attended the birthday celebration of Governor Marañon in his hometown of Sagay last March 19, flying there in a private plane straight from Nueva Ecija with Speaker and Ms Jose de Venecia. The talk there at that time was how the presidential plane had problems landing as the Bacolod Airport was not visible due to sudden inclement weather; the plane had to hover over it for quite a time, and finally managed to do a somewhat precarious landing. Then she came from nearby Cebu to open the Panaad Festival upon the promise of husband Mike Arroyo, and recently, to open the Sangguniang Kabataan National Congress. Governor Marañon even raised the hand of GMA before all the local politicians while his brother Alfredo presented a covenant between the NPC and Lakas at the regional level. Interestingly, however, that covenant made sure the various NPC candidates had no opponents, but the few Lakas candidates, such as reelectionist Bacolod City Rep. Monico Puentebella and Ignacio Arroyo, also running for the House in the fifth district, found themselves facing stiff opposition.

* * *

Recent news items indicate that the Marañon brothers and a number of NPC candidates in Negros have switched to FPJ. K-4's problem is that the defections do not give the party time to put up candidates against them. Had the NPC indicated its sentiments earlier, for instance, former Gov. Lito Coscolluela, who retired undefeated, could have put up a good fight for the governorship. No one in Negros would believe that the Marañons would move without the blessing of NPC founder Eduardo Cojuangco; interestingly he left for Australia before the coalition shattered. "*Na-Brutus kami*," mused Puentebella, but he says the Negrenses are sympathetic to GMA and the K-4 because of the NPC's treachery. The K-4 people regard the Aguinaldo episode as a boon from heaven.

Rights and duties

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"LISTENING to the report, I felt like crying," Lina said, near-tears herself. It was time for the open forum of the gathering, sponsored by Likhaan, on "Renewing our Commitment to the ICPD Program of Action." Lina, a mother from an urban poor community in Malabon, was reacting to a report on the state of Filipino women's reproductive health and rights, which noted that the "right to safe motherhood" as well as other aspects of reproductive health continue to elude many Filipinas.

"There is a lot of fear among women like us," said Lina, speaking in Filipino. "Even if we know we have the right to plan our families and protect our health, if we use contraception at all, we use it on the sly, afraid of what our neighbors, families and husbands will say." And though women like her want to limit their pregnancies and the number of their children, she said, so many factors prevent them from practicing family planning, not the least of which is their difficulty in accessing reproductive health services and supplies.

In the face of this sense of powerlessness, poor women like her resort to clandestine abortions, even if they know this poses a serious threat to their health and lives. As Lina noted, "perhaps only one in every 30 women in neighborhoods like ours has not had an abortion yet."

"Even if we know we are putting our lives at risk, we will do everything we can for the sake of our families," she declared. "The least government can do is to help us organize the women so we can raise awareness about our rights and what we can do to protect ourselves."

* * *

BUT as the invited reactors to the forum observed, not only is government proving remiss in promoting the reproductive health and rights of women, especially poor women, too often, it has itself placed barriers to the full attainment of this entitlement.

Dr. Eleanor Carlos of the Commission on Human Rights asserted that "reproductive health is a human right," and that in fact "it is the obligation of government to protect and facilitate the enjoyment of this right."

Former Health Secretary Dr. Alberto Romualdez stressed that "the national government must play a lead role in ensuring that local government units carry out their responsibilities to provide reproductive health services." He and other participants in the forum cited the example of the city government of Manila, which not only withholds family planning services and supplies—save for natural family planning—from its citizens, but also pressures even private entities involved from providing these services.

In Baseco, a sprawling urban poor community, for instance, barangay officials frequently harassed the staff of a private NGO-run health clinic until they were forced to close down and their grassroots leaders, most of them women, to go "underground." "The women tell me that sometimes they feel like they're pushing illegal drugs," said Gladys Manalang of the Women's Health Care Foundation of their community outreach workers who re-supply their neighbors' needs for contraceptives.

So, is family planning still legal in this country or has it been, without our noticing it, declared a crime by the Talibans among us?

* * *

RESPECTING and promoting the reproductive health and rights of women is just one of the many things women demand of the government, regardless of whoever emerge the victors at the national and local elections.

Here's a "Five-Point Agenda" based on proposals of Kilos Kabaro, a coalition of 33 women's organizations, that was first presented to candidates in the 2000 elections, as well as of the Pilakk or Pinagkaisang Lakas ng Kababaihan at Kabataan, a federation of seven women's organizations from Malabon, Pasay and Bulacan.

Economic strategies that will truly eradicate poverty, not the same trickle-down approach that has only widened the disparity between the rich and the poor. These economic strategies are not so much focused on economic growth but on income redistribution through progressive taxation, land reform, debt restructuring/moratorium, fair trade policies, etc.

Making basic social services a matter of human entitlement, not a privilege of those who can afford. People undoubtedly are the best resource of any nation. Investing in housing, health care—including reproductive health care—and education will translate to people's wellbeing and greater productivity.

Responsible and participatory governance in all levels, starting from the top. This means undertaking reforms to restore competence, transparency and accountability in the bureaucracy. It also means expanding the mechanisms by which the poorest and most marginalized citizens can engage with government.

* * *

***GENUINE women's empowerment, not "token" programs that mask gender inequality.* Women need decent employment as well as distinct basic social services such as daycare and lactating centers, shelters for VAW, health care services including the full spectrum of Family Planning services and post-abortion care.**

***Security and peace.* Human security in all its various aspects—physical, psychological, economic, social—is a basic need. The most effective antidote to violent crimes is not the death penalty but the assurance that justice will be dealt swiftly and fairly. The most effective antidote to conflict and rebellion is not militarization but social reforms.**

Writes Dr. Junice Melgar of Likhaan of this five-point agenda: "The country's dire situation requires a fresh, innovative and principled approach. We have no illusions that the path ahead will be smooth and easy. But we have to continue to hope and work for our country's future. We must continue to develop a politics for social change now."

The Recollects

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THE FIRST Recollects to work for the christianization of Zambales were Fr. Cristobal de Cristo and Fr. Andres de Espiritu Santo. At first the natives paid them no heed but neither were they hostile. The missionaries maintained themselves with grasses and roots from the mountains and this suffering and sacrifice impressed the locals, making them more receptive.

They drew closer to the friars and started listening to their doctrines without great resistance and thus their evangelization began. Subsequently, 1,500 natives were baptized and a church and convent constructed for the town of Bolinao and nearby settlements.

Contributing greatly to the natives' conversion was the cutting down by the two friars of a bamboo grove believed to be enchanted. Before that, it was thought that any person who dared to cut a stem from that grove would die. Since nothing happened to the priests the people were impressed.

The *reducciones* extended to the south of Masinloc, specifically the settlements of Tuguy and Paynayen, which were subject of constant night-time raids conducted by the Negritos from the mountains.

To protect the new Christians from their enemies and give them a sense of security, the government had a fort constructed in Paynayen with some artillery and manned by Filipino troops. In this expansive coast only the settlement at Sigayan, eight leagues from Masinloc, remained to be reduced. Fr. Alonso Agustin of Manila was placed in charge of the mission and he christianized a good number of infidels and constructed a church and a convent.

The father was not exactly popular with his ways of administering his duties in a severe manner. In one instance, while preaching, he railed against the obstinacy and rebelliousness of the infidels threatening them in the name of the government if they delayed their conversion. In the crowd were some people of influence who resented his sermon and resolved to take revenge on what they considered an offense. The most daring of them approached the priest contesting the new doctrines. In the heat of the argument, he hit Father Agustin with his cutlass, leaving the priest gravely injured. The felon's accomplices then went into a riot, burnt the church and convent and escaped to the mountains.

Some Christians took the injured priest to Masinloc where he died a victim, it was said, of an ambition to conquer towns not for the glory of God but for that of the king. The mission was thus abandoned for a while. After some time, the reduction of the residents was again attempted. Eventually the objective was achieved but not without difficulty and toil. The church and the convent were rebuilt and the town was finally established with some 700 residents. This is the town called Sta. Cruz in the valley of Zambales.

The zeal of the Recollects impressed the residents of Manila who sought the transfer of this group of religious to Intramuros without abandoning their convent and church in Bagumbayan which have become open to the continuous attacks by the Dutch, Japanese and Chinese. To effect the transfer, P. Juan de S. Geronimo bought a small house near the foundry of the artillery with money collected from the charity of the residents. Gov. Juan da Silva donated a site that was uncomfortably narrow but served its purpose until the heirless D. Bernardino del Castillo, master of camp, took the responsibility at the insistence of his wife, Maria Enriquez de Cespedes, and erected a church and convent, spending more than P100,000 from his wealth, representing earnings from farms and other investments.

He had the church and convent decorated at the cost of over P50,000, stating that he was ready to spend all his capital even if this meant that all he would have left would be his salary.

He donated as well a rest house and various properties on condition that the Recollects were to establish a church and convent where their retired priests could live free from the noise and rumble of the city. The vice provincial, Fr. Rodrigo de S. Miguel took possession of the donations, transformed the house into a convent and erected a small church in honor of San Sebastian. In this church was installed a few years later an ivory image of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (stolen after World War II) from Mexico. The devotion to the virgin spread quickly that a *confradia* was organized starting with more than 2,000 members.

Responding favorably to a petition from the Recollects, the Carmelites, through Fr. Diego del Castillo, granted the convent of San Sebastian de Filipinas the exclusive authority with apostolic privilege to distribute and bless the scapulars of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

When D. Bernardino del Castillo died, the rest of his properties was willed to S. Nicolas de Tolentino. Both he and his wife were interred in the church where two statues were installed in memory of their generosity and as a symbol of gratitude. The church however was destroyed in an earthquake and when built anew, Del Castillo's patronage and charity were no longer recognized.

Survival

YOUNG BLOOD

Ala D.S. Bacleon

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

YEAR 2003. How did you assess your past year? Interesting, rocky or like the previous ones? Mine was a roller-coaster ride that in the end, I can say, gave me an unusual view of life.

The year started without much of a bang. It was the first time that a sister and I celebrated New Year by our twosome. A month earlier, my parents and three other siblings had left for the United States after getting their immigration visa.

Between the two of us, with our parents in a distant land, we promised each other that we will keep ourselves strong, mentally and emotionally, in the face of all problems and be financially independent.

The year went smoothly until the third week of February when I was told my division head in a university where I was teaching then wished to see me.

I had been with the school since finishing college, teaching chemistry subjects in the tertiary level. I am a difficult teacher for lazy students. I believe that students should read their lesson before coming to class. Spoon-feeding has never been my cup of tea.

I felt a bit nervous, wondering what could have possibly gone wrong that would merit a special session with my direct supervisor. I cannot fully remember now his exact words, but I do remember what the talk was all about. He received a letter, addressed to the dean, from half of my organic chemistry class. They were seeking help from the dean regarding their grades in my class. They pointed out I was ineffective as a teacher and unfair for favoring repeaters who were topping my exams, while being inconsiderate to their needs.

My body felt cold and numb after I read the letter. The first thought that came to mind was who could have written this? Who among my students harbored such a horrible impression of me? I have never heard such ugly remarks about me from any of them before. But when I checked for names on the letter, I saw no signatures.

My boss explained the students were afraid to come out in the open for fear of retaliation. Me? I would never do that, I thought. My parents taught me breeding. They taught me that any conflict can be settled through level-headed talk.

My boss asked for my comments. I said I didn't want to talk to him. The miscommunication was between my students and me. Not with him.

A few days later, I got to know the identities of those who were behind the letter. By the succeeding weeks, there were talks about how to settle the misunderstanding.

Those were difficult weeks for me. I was crying at night, worried about losing my job. I could not understand how it could have happened to me. How I ached to see the conflict resolved as soon as possible. But my complaining students were demanding higher grades to qualify for the next year level. On the other hand, I was insistent on giving them grades based on their exam results and laboratory experiments.

We needed a common ground. We agreed on holding make-up classes. It was added work for me but I didn't mind. I just wanted an immediate end to the problem. But after two meetings, they felt nothing was going in the direction they wanted: higher grades. So again they elevated the matter to the "people on top."

We got to "settle" the conflict in the last week of March. They got fairly good grades on the subject from another teacher (since I didn't want to sign my name on their grading sheet; so the school officials assigned somebody else to give them the grades). The other half of the class got their grades from me.

In the first week of April, my department chair informed me of my teaching load for the summer. A few minutes later, I was called to a meeting by my division head and was told that the university president did not want to renew my contract for June. I was shocked. I didn't cry. I was too shocked to cry in front of him. The thing I had feared was coming to pass. I'll be jobless by June.

I told my mom what happened, adding that I would be taking up nursing. I wanted a career change. Maybe, teaching was not for me after all. My mom was supportive. There was no pressure from her for me to get a new job. I spent summer teaching chemistry.

Before my summer contract ended, I changed my mind. I applied for a teaching position in three universities and a college. I was made to undergo interviews and teaching demos. By June, I had a new teaching job—the best in my life—in a state university and had ditched the thought of pursuing a nursing course.

The new job somehow made me a colleague to my former college professors. It also gave me a wider influence as my students come from all over Mindanao.

I feel some awe having this other chance to teach. This time there is no letter to stop me from what I love doing. In the university, learning standards are high. If you can't swim, you'll sink. That is something in line with what I was trained for.

Other than having diligent students in a wonderful job, I also got a big boost in my career. The next four months had me shuttling back and forth to Manila for my Ph.D. study seminars. During the same period, my masteral work was published in a journal. By December, I had conducted two seminars. New lines were being added to my resumé.

Before I knew it, I had completed my first year away from my parents. I almost couldn't believe it. Time simply flew so fast. I am still trying to take stock of the things that happened to me in 2003.

I think of what could have been: I could have given up and quit and changed careers in the middle of the year. But God did not allow it. He has big plans for me. Yes, it was a difficult year and I pray that I may not suffer again the pains that I had to endure then.

But certainly it was also a most wonderful year of groundbreaking opportunities. I was tempted to hate my students who moved heaven and earth to get me out of their school. But they renewed and strengthened my resolve to stick to the teaching profession, and to develop myself, and never to be intimidated by people who have connections, money and power.

Will 2004 be a more interesting year? What new challenges await me this year? I'm positive I'll be able to survive them all.

Ala D.S. Bacleon, 26, is an instructor in one of the state universities in Davao. She wrote the article as she approached her second year away from her dad and mom.

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DepEd's new grading system

REGARDING the article by Dona Pazzibugan (PDI, 2/24/4) which inaccurately reported on the new grading system, may we clarify:

The new grading system is about awarding grades based solely on student performance, replacing the old system of transmutation. Under grade transmutation using 70 as the base, answering 15 percent of all test items correctly translates into a 75 percent passing mark. To score 85 percent (honors), one has to correctly answer only 60 percent of all test items. On the other hand, under the new system, to get 75 percent in the class report card, one has to correctly answer 75 percent of all test items; to get 85 percent in the card, 85 percent of all test items must be answered correctly.

Other salient points of the new grading system:

- The student's grade is a combination of written tests (30 percent weight), quizzes, seatwork, homework, projects, oral recitation, etc.
- The final grade for the year is the simple average of the four grading periods.
- The passing grade is 75 percent (70 percent for SY 2003-04 only).
- The lowest grade in the report card is 65 percent. This means grades of 65 percent or lower will be reflected in the report card as 65 percent; grades higher than 65 percent will be reflected as is.
- Written tests will feature 60 percent easy questions (factual information), 30 percent moderately hard (higher order thinking), and 10 percent difficult (analysis, synthesis).

Clearly, the new grading system is about quality, based on student performance. When the Department of Education ended the use of transmutation, we anticipated a drop in grades. The change in grading, however, does not change the level of learning achieved. Rather, it reflects the true level of that learning.

For purposes of graduation (and the determination of valedictorian and salutatorian), the top two students in the class remain the top two, regardless of the grading system used. The DepEd's instruction to schools is to base honors on ranking (example, top 10 graduating students) setting aside the requirement (for this year only) that candidates for honors should have no grade lower than 85 percent. Note, however, that an 85 percent "transmuted" grade is actually 60 percent in performance. This is the kind of "magic" transmutation does. It makes honor students out of those who can answer less than 60 percent of a test. Under the new grading system, a student getting 80 percent ("less" than the "transmuted" 85 percent in the old system) is actually a real 80 percent.

Pazzibugan leapt to the conclusion that students with failing grades could be valedictorians and salutatorians. Clearly no one who fails can graduate, much less be valedictorian or salutatorian. The set of changes introduced in grading are aimed at ensuring that students and teachers work hard to attain quality outcomes.

The article was not only inaccurate and misleading; it trivializes an issue of strategic importance to the education sector. Serious journalists need to learn to ask hard questions about complex issues rather than try to oversimplify what they don't understand.

Neither is the issue a new one. The grading system has been under study since June 2003 and was widely discussed with different stakeholder groups throughout the country in different fora.

—JUAN MIGUEL LUZ,
undersecretary,
Finance and Administration,
Department of Education,
DepEd Complex,
Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

UNDERSECRETARY Juan Miguel Luz got all his accusations wrong. If he had only checked the list of attendees, or asked the reporters he said he spoke with, he would have known I was at the DepEd dialogue last Feb. 20. I stayed for as long as I could, past 4 p.m. The dialogue was then nearly over. I listened to the presentation and followed the discussion, which was mainly on the new grading system. I did file stories about that.

Then the DepEd disclosed its new rules for selecting honor students and there was a discussion. This is what my Feb. 24 story was about.

I understand that what got the DepEd officials' goat is the lead: "Even students with failing marks can now **aspire** *(emphasis mine) to be a valedictorian and salutatorian in public schools."*

I did not mislead. That is hypothetically true under the new rules.

The DepEd did away with the requirement of a minimum grade of 80 in any subject. So, say an honor student gets a failing mark in one subject in the third or fourth grading period, he can still aspire for top honors. That is, if his final grade is the highest in the class.

At the dialogue, someone did point out that they may end up with a valedictorian who has high marks in the first and second grading periods, but very low marks in the third and fourth grading periods as a result of the new grading system. Secretary Edilberto de Jesus said while this may be hypothetically possible, he believes the school must have another student with better grades than that hypothetical valedictorian.

I did not quote Luz out of context. I was there. I did not trivialize the story. If Luz wants to take issue with why the story was presented as a cartoon feature, so be it. I understand the new grading system and its implications. Being a radical reform implemented in the middle of the school year, it is not surprising that it should give rise to several problems and controversies.

I laud the DepEd officials for pushing through with these much needed reforms.

—DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN,
PDI reporter

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ERNIE SARMIENTO

PCCI is non-partisan

WE would like to clarify the picture release that came out in the INQUIRER last March 10 in which business leaders were shown convening with presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry is an association of businessmen, formed under the not-for-profit corporation laws of the Philippines. It currently represents the biggest number of businesses nationwide.

We emphasize that the views and opinions expressed in the picture release do not represent that of the PCCI as an organization and do not support or endorse any political group or personality. Instead, we serve as a non-partisan voice of Philippine business for the nation and for our members.

—NOEMI L. SALUDO,
president,
Philippine Chamber of Commerce
and Industry,
19/F Salcedo Towers,
169 HV dela Costa St.,
Salcedo Village, Makati City

Transparent, clearer rules for alien registration needed

ACCORDING to the Bureau of Immigration, on Dec. 18, 2003, it entered into a build-operate-transfer (BOT) agreement requiring all aliens to pay an onerous annual registration fee of $50. The public deserves to know what this "BOT" is all about. How much was the acquisition cost of the equipment and with what company is the bureau dealing with? Why require payment in US dollars? When was the bidding conducted and who were the bidders?

I came across a copy of the bureau's implementing guidelines which I believe are confusing and too imposing on the aliens for the following reasons:

1. The current annual registration was already concluded on Feb. 29, 2004 and all aliens complied with the registration rules and paid the corresponding fees. Now the bureau is requiring aliens to undergo a "high-tech" registration on or before June 30, 2004 and to pay another registration fee of $50.

2. There has been no adequate dissemination of information about the "BOT," but the deadline for compliance has been so closely set on June 30, 2004.

3. I called the bureau and tried to find out the number of aliens in the Philippines now. After being referred to several departments, I wasn't able to get the figure and I got the impression no one in the bureau seems to know the answer. The purpose of my inquiry was to point out that all aliens in the Philippines—there are several hundred thousands of them, including infants—are required to personally appear at the bureau's head office in Manila. Such requirement is inconvenient and costly for those living in the provinces, especially those in the Visayas and Mindanao. The bureau said that it would allow those in the provinces to register in the regional offices where facilities are available, but nothing was said about registration in regions lacking such facilities.

4. The bureau also claimed that physically impaired aliens may request the bureau to send personnel to their homes to gather the needed electronic data, but didn't say how to go about it. How much extra money has to be spent? How soon can they visit the homes of those aliens? In the meantime, the registration deadline is fast approaching.

Before implementing the new Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR) I-Card project, the Bureau of Immigration should amend its rules to make the process more reasonable and workable. I am, therefore, appealing to President Macapagal-Arroyo on behalf of aliens in the Philippines to direct the BID to extend the deadline of the new electronic ACR I-Card registration from 6-12 months and to reduce the fees to a more reasonable amount in Philippine pesos.

—L. ENCHONG SEE,
enchong@eudoramail.com

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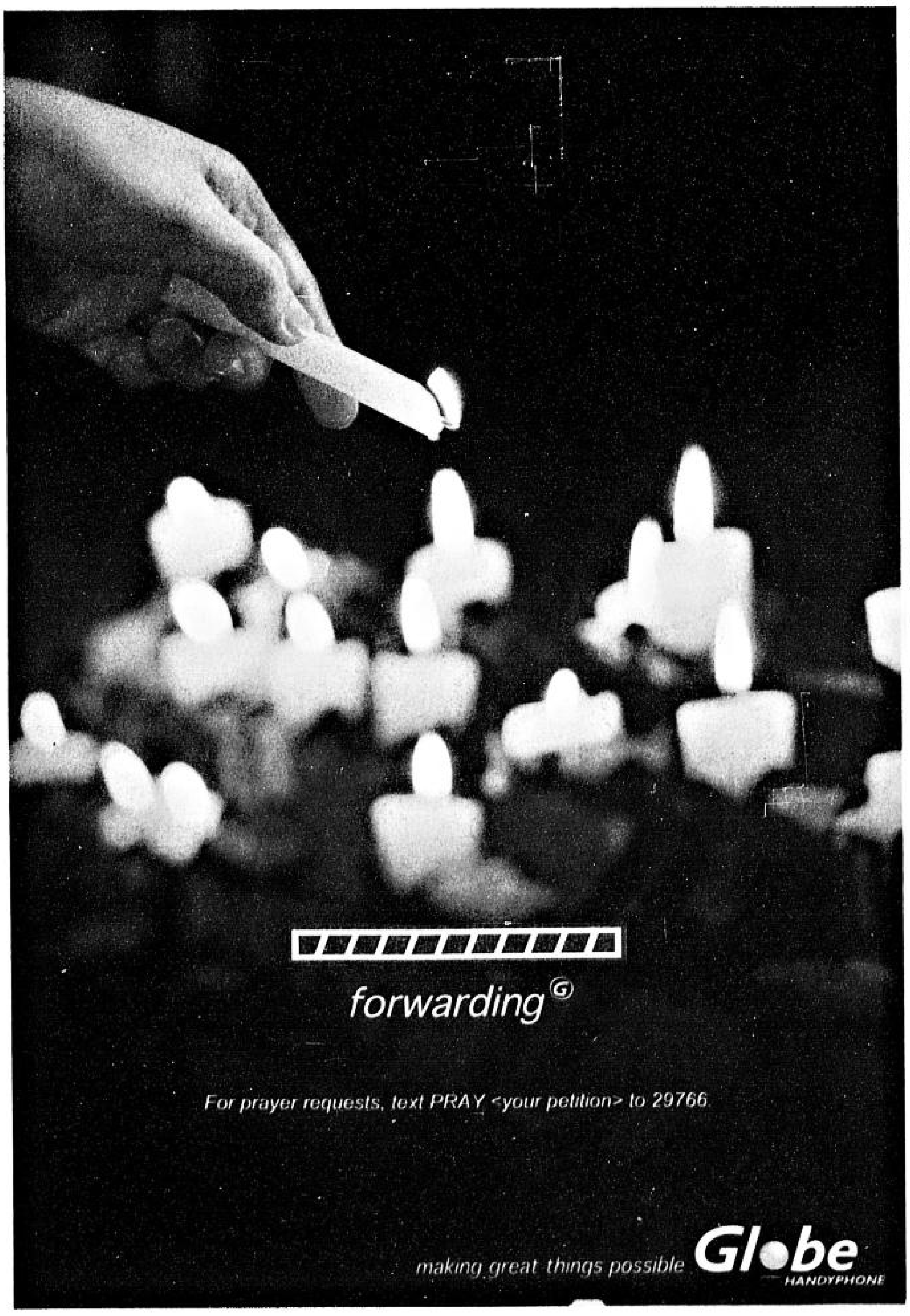
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Restore the old traffic flow on Mindanao Avenue

THE RECENT implementation of the U-turn slots on Mindanao and Congressional Avenues are causing accidents and heavy traffic.

We used to pass through Mindanao Avenue without any hassle. Now it takes us some time to get home because of the clogging of vehicles at the U-turn slots.

May we request Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando to return the avenue to its original traffic flow because the U-turn slots are not doing us any good.

—ILUMINADA DJ NOCOM,
5 King Alexis St.,
Kingspoint Subd., Bagbag,
Novaliches, Quezon City

Erroneous, unfair column items

THIS concerns the column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan last March 13.

The pertinent portion of the column concerned read as follows:

"The reason for the withdrawal of the appointment to the Supreme Court of Sandiganbayan Justice Minita Chico-Nazario remains a mystery, but there appears to be several. One was the criticism she reaped from the anti-graft court's decision to allow Estrada to leave for the US for medical reasons, which he eventually refused. There's also speculation in media and legal circles that the influential Villaraza Law Office objected to Nazario since it was allegedly campaigning for Deputy Court Administrator Presbitero Velasco, a Sigma Rho brod of The Firm's top honcho, Pancho Villaraza.

"I don't know Velasco personally, but a small episode last year seems to put his sense of judgment into question. Reports say Velasco had organized a golf tournament for Supreme Court justices and lawyers from several leading Makati law firms, including The Firm. When Chief Justice Hilario Davide heard of the plan, he scuttled it. Which was only right, for many of those lawyers have cases before the Court and they cannot be seen fraternizing with the magistrates."

Personally, I feel that the article in question was written without the writer verifying the facts surrounding the matters alluded to. I have not organized any golf tournament for Supreme Court justices and lawyers from Makati law firms as it was the Philippine Judges Foundation Inc., composed of retired justices and judges headed by retired Court of Appeals Justice Mariano Umali which undertook the same.

Secondly, the golfing event in question pushed through and was not scuttled by Chief Justice Davide. Incidentally, Davide was out of the country when the erroneous report on the golf tournament came out. As a matter of fact, I myself was abroad when the alleged tournament was being organized. Thus, the writer's conclusion that my sense of judgment on the sports event is questionable is clearly bereft of factual basis.

To my mind, this is not fair comment as the opinion was not formed with a reasonable degree of care and inquiry (as elucidated by the Supreme Court in US v. Jose C. Sedano, GR No. 4998, Oct. 25, 1909, 14 Phil. 338). Worse, I was not given the chance to explain my side at the time.

Regarding the alleged withdrawal of Nazario's appointment, I am unaware that the Villaraza law office was campaigning for me. I left the country for an observation tour of the court systems in Central and South America as part of my duties as court administrator prior to the submission of the nominees for the vacancy in the Supreme Court to President Macapagal-Arroyo. I came back on Feb. 9 in accordance with my work schedule when news of Nazario's appointment broke out.

I have been nominated for the position of Supreme Court justice three times and on each of these occasions, I was not appointed to the position. Thus, there is much ado about my being a fraternity brod of Pancho Villaraza for nothing.

—PRESBITERO J. VELASCO JR.,
court administrator,
Supreme Court, Manila

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Irrigation exec warns of another fish kill as water levels drop

CABATUAN, Isabela—Due to the critically low water level at the Magat Dam in nearby Ramon town, irrigation officials expressed fears of another fish kill unless fish cage operators reduced their tilapia stocks at their fish cages.

Antonio Ramos, National Irrigation Administration-Magat River Integrated Irrigation System operations manager, said the Magat Dam, one of the largest dams in Asia and a major power and irrigation water source in Cagayan Valley, posted at least 165.85-meter water elevation on April 1, still 14 meters below the desired water level.

"With this very low water level, it is not remote that a fish kill will happen again," Ramos told the INQUIRER.

Magat Dam inflow on Thursday morning was recorded at 35 cubic meters per second and the outflow was 12 cubic meters per second to service at least 500 hectares of palay farms in the province.

Water irrigation services in the Magat service area stopped this week after most of the farms were already at post-reproductive and harvest stage, Ramos said.

Sufficient water level is needed at the Magat Dam reservoir, which supplies and maintains water to the fish cages and pens within the 45-kilometer stretch from Baretbet Bridge in Nueva Vizcaya to Ramon in Isabela.

Fish cage operators suffered P50 million in losses due to tilapia fish kill in April last year.

Workers at the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the National Irrigation Administration are monitoring the water quality and maintaining water level at the reservoir.

Ramos, however, said the fish kill in April last year had made 1,500 fish cage operators realize not to overstock their cages.

"Most of the fish cage operators have learned their lessons and they do not want to gamble now. Water is not enough to accommodate the re-stocking and continued stocking due to very low water level," he said.

Some operators have been pinning their hopes on plain luck or bad fate and have continued re-stocking, he added.

At least 600 floating houses along Magat River, which snakes through Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela and Ifugao, have yet to be demolished despite a promise of Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy Jr. last year to dismantle these to prevent another fish kill.

Gumersindo Lasam, Department of Agriculture regional director in Cagayan Valley, said they conducted cloud seeding operations for the past two months but these were not enough to fill in the reservoir.

He said he hoped rain showers would come this month and May to at least mitigate the problem. "Good water management is needed and we hope to sustain the operations of the dam," he said. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Cops raid Batangas homes of rivals of ex-DOJ head

BATANGAS CITY—In what appears to be the start of the heated political battle in this city, the houses of known supporter and family members of Batangas city mayor Eduardo Dimacuha, whose son Angelito is running for vice governor, were raided by police yesterday morning.

The houses of Ruben Dimacuha, 67, Thomas Dimacuha, 42, both in Barangay Kumintang this city, Jun Dimacuha, 32, in Barangay Bolbok, and Maximo Exconde, a businessman and known Dimacuha supporter in Barangay Sta. Clara, were raided from 6 to 8 a.m. by about 80 Mimaropa policemen.

The raiding team even rerouted the traffic in the main highways near the houses of the Dimacuhas for about three hours.

The search warrant from Regional Trial Court Judge Paterno Tac-an was issued the day before and was supposed to be for loose firearms.

Police found caliber .9 mm and .45 pistols in Ruben's house, while Thomas voluntarily surrendered his .9 mm pistol. Both brothers showed the licenses for their guns.

The Dimacuha brothers, and Exconde, who are in their 60s and 70s, were reportedly "shocked" and refused to talk to media.

Lawyer Jose Amor Amorado, legal counsel for the Dimacuhas, said the search warrant was connected to the murder case of Juvy Magsino, vice mayor of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro, which President Macapagal-Arroyo declared as solved last February.

"The police who applied for the search warrant have identified a certain Reynante Antenor as one of the suspects (in) the Juvy Magsino murder and theorized that he is being coddled by the Dimacuhas of Batangas City," Amorado said.

He said the raid was a "clear political harassment that could have been inflicted by their rivals."

"If the police wanted Antenor, why don't they catch him? Why raid the homes of the Dimacuhas? Why connect the Dimacuhas with a suspect that is not even connected to them?" Amorado said.

But he refused to name names.

Mayor Dimacuha said his family is not connected to Antenor. "All we have are licensed pistols that we need for self-defense," he said.

Lawyer Ronnie Geron, Antenor's lawyer, said when his client received the notice of complaint, it came with the warrant of arrest, which meant that the case has been going on even before Antenor knew about it.

An Inquirer source from the Dimacuha family said they have discovered a plot by ex-justice secretary Hernando Perez to implicate the mayor to the murder of Magsino and to have him jailed in Naujan. The Inquirer tried to contact Perez eight times but he never answered the phone.

Perez has been supporting the candidacy of vice mayor Ruel Chavez, a rival of mayor Dimacuha, who is also running for city mayor. Dimacuha's son Angelito "Don-don" Dimacuha, is running for vice governor and is pitted against vice gubernatorial candidate Ricky Recto.

Recto's mobile phone was answered by a machine. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Leftist group retaliates vs 'anti-Red' governor

KIDAPAWAN CITY—He started the fire and now North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Pinol seems to be getting the heat from party list groups he has been campaigning against in the coming elections.

In an attempt to air their sympathy to Bayan Muna, Anak Bayan and Anak Pawis, the militant group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) called on the people of North Cotabato to reject Pinol's bid for reelection because "it is time to end the monster's reign in North Cotabato."

"We call on the decent thinking and patriotic people of North Cotabato to reject the political ambition of Pinol to remain in power as warlord cum fascist government official in the province through the ballots," the group said.

"Peace will not reign in the province as long as Pinol is there sitting as warlord governor of the the province," Pamalakaya national chairman Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

Hicap's statement stemmed from Pinol's call to his constituents in the province to junk Bayan Muna, Anak Bayan, and Anak Pawis as a way of protest for the killing of a village chairman in Makilala early March by the New People's Army.

Piñol said the groups are "connected" with the NPA and therefore must be punished for the death of Maximo Ravina, barangay captain of Roderos in the town of Makilala, North Cotabato.

The killing of Ravina was owned up by the NPA. Ricardo Fermiza, spokesperson of the Magtanggol Roque Command operating in Makilala, said Ravina was a "militarist leader."

Hicap said Pinol's call was an endorsement of witch-hunting and brutal persecution of legal democratic organizations and party list groups such as Bayan Muna, Anak Pawis, and Anak Bayan. *Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Iloilo's 'farm school without walls'

FARMER Rosal Prologo harvests the organically grown rice. JSAC PHOTO

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Iloilo City

RODOLFO Sumbi's reputation as a soil taster is known among farmers in Iloilo City who are converts of organic farming.

By tasting a pinch of earth, he knows if the soil is pesticide-laden. His feet, equally sentient, can determine if the soil is bereft of nutrients through years of being soaked in a cocktail of chemicals to make plants grow and eliminate weeds, insect pests and harmful snails, commonly known as "*kuhol*."

"The natural, pesticide-free soil is spongy while the soil treated with all sorts of chemical feels like concrete. Its smell and taste is similar to that of sewage silt, *mabang-og* (musty)," Sumbi said.

A high school dropout, Sumbi is the technician of the Archdiocese of Jaro Social Action Center (JSAC), the leading advocate of natural farming using the technology popularized by the Masipag (Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura), a farmers' non-government organization. He was among the 2,000 trained on the natural way of farming, and among the 119 who practice what they have learned.

The Masipag technology tries to wean farmers away from cash-intensive rice farming that promotes hybrid rice varieties and chemicals instead of traditional rice varieties and organic farm inputs. It also reduces farm expenses and soil stress, making farming earth-friendly.

It is a critique to Green Revolution that was popularized in the Philippines during the Marcos regime three decades ago. That agricultural program introduced intensive farming by using high-yielding seeds that could not grow and survive without fertilizers and pesticides. Such situation made farmers poorer and farming more expensive and hazardous to health, Masipag advocates say.

Experimental farm

The JSAC oversees a 3.5-hectare ricefield in Barangay Sigangaw, Zarraga town. It was transformed into an experimental farm where Masipag rice varieties are developed, verified and planted for commercial use.

In the farm school without walls, rows of traditional rice varieties grow on especially marked plots. Practices in managing soil, plant, water, nutrient and microbial interactions are experimented.

The farm is the only one of its kind in the village, surrounded by farms planted to hybrid rice and sprayed with pesticides.

JSAC director Monsignor Meliton Oso said the unconventional way of rice farming had raised eyebrows in the community.

"At first, our neighbors said our rice seedlings would not grow. When they did, they said they would not bear grains. When they did, they said maybe we cheated and applied fertilizers or pesticides," said Oso.

March 15 was a special day because it was harvest time in the experimental farm. Oso led a group of farmers scythe the ripened grains. Then he left them to quietly do their work under the sun.

Farmer Enrique Penticasi, who is also with the JSAC, said they were proud of their work in the experimental farm.

"We want small farmers to have control over the resources and technology for the good of their families and communities," he said.

Hybrid rice seeds are developed by agrochemical corporations and they are planted only at one time. When planted a second time, they lose their superior traits, said Sumbi.

Lower costs

Georie Pitong, Masipag coordinator, said in response to a set of questions sent by e-mail that many traditional rice varieties were still in the hands of farmers and these were being bred and selected by her group.

Nearly a thousand traditional rice varieties are pest-resistant and produce better yields than hybrid ones, she said. They also require less expense, giving farmers a higher net income.

With the Masipag technology, farmers could reduce their expenses by as much as 50 percent. In conventional rice farming, using hybrid rice and chemical farm inputs, a farmer spends P15,000 to P20,000 per hectare. With the natural farming technology, costs could be brought down to P8,000 to P12,000. The bulk of the expenses are for labor when transplanting rice seedlings.

At the JSAC farm, seedlings which are eight days old are transplanted for extensive root growth, Sumbi said. More care is also exerted so as not to stress the seedlings, which are grown inside bamboo nodes and not in a flooded nursery.

The seedlings are also widely spaced (at least 25 cm by 25 cm apart). There is only one seedling per hill, not three or four as in traditional transplanting. The space in between hills is good for the roots and canopies to grow.

Masipag technology also saves on cost of rice seeds because only four to six kilos are needed for an area of one hectare. Conventional rice farming would need 10 times as much field. Seedlings for traditional rice varieties are available at the JSAC to farmers who are willing to shift to organic farming.

Knowing the land

Penticasi said Masipag technology has made farmers become more acquainted with their farms because in the absence of a fixed set of practices. They learn as they go along, he said.

Harmful pests are managed by concoction of sprays made from plants, but friendly ones are left to thrive. Instead of chemical fertilizers, farmers use composts, such as rice straw and hull. They may also plant inter-season crops like mung beans and some vegetables, thus enhancing soil quality, said Sumbi.

The rice yield in farms using Masipag technology is about 60 cavans (one cavan is 55 kilos) per hectare, below what could be produced under the recently launched Gloria hybrid rice, so named after President Macapagal-Arroyo. It promises to yield 200 cavans. But under poor soil conditions and less care, Gloria rice would only yield about 60 cavans.

In a press statement, Masipag described the claims of Gloria rice as "misleading" because the yield of 200 cavans could be attained only under the most ideal conditions—fertile soil, enough irrigation, sufficient sunlight, and doses of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

It said the government should instead support sustainable agriculture in which even without the use of chemicals, farmers would enjoy decent rice yields and a healthy environment.

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5 towns in Pangasinan recommended for list of election 'hot spots'

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—The Commission on Elections provincial office here has recommended the placing of five Pangasinan towns under its control during the May elections because of election-related violence and intense political rivalry among candidates.

Provincial election supervisor Temie Lambino identified the towns as Natividad, Binmaley, Bugallon, Tayug and San Nicolas.

In his memorandum to the Comelec office in Manila, Lambino asked that government soldiers, especially Marines, be assigned to these areas to help the local police.

In Natividad, municipal registrar Rodolfo Ruiz was shot dead on March 9 by motor-riding armed men.

Because of the shooting, Senior Supt. Mario Sandiego, provincial police director, asked the Comelec to declare Natividad as an "area of immediate concern."

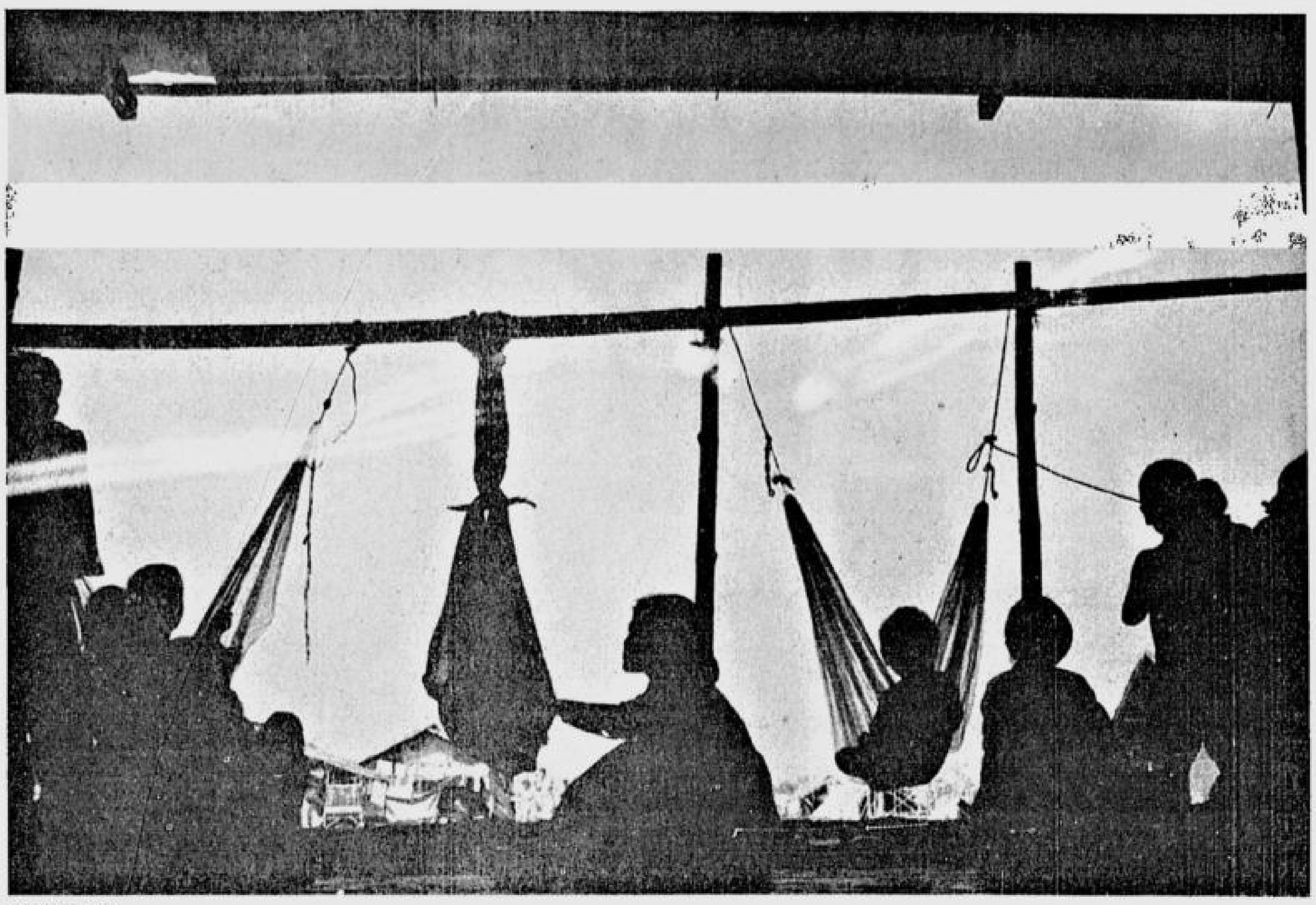
In Tayug, the husband of Barangay chair Rebecca Jose, who was reported to be supporting a mayoral candidate, was also shot dead on March 10.

The victim, Quirino Jose Jr., was on his way home when he was killed.

In Bugallon, Vice Mayor Ernesto Mata, who is running for mayor, survived an attack on his life in November last year while in San Nicolas but his driver was killed.

Binmaley was recommended for Comelec control because of intense rivalry between mayoral candidates Samuel Rosario and Marissa Bangsal Cerezo.

Sandiego said the police are studying whether to put under Comelec control San Carlos City where killings have also occurred during the campaign period.



EDWIN BACASMAS/PDI PHOTO

SHELTER
Home is where children and mothers can rest even if it is an evacuation center in Pikit, North Cotabato that was set up to provide shelter to residents fleeing the war between government soldiers and Moro guerrillas.

Group says US toxic wastes claim another life

OLONGAPO CITY—American military toxic wastes have claimed another victim with the death of a former evacuee inside the former Clark Air Base in Pampanga, according to the People's Task Force for Bases Clean Up.

Rolando Dedicatoria, 65, a half Aeta, died of lung cancer on March 28, bringing to five the fatalities from illnesses believed related to exposure to toxic wastes in the last five months.

The task force said Dedicatoria used to live near the dumping site inside the old Clark Air Base before residing at the Iram resettlement area in Barangay Cabalan here in 1992.

According to Jade Russel Timbas, Subic coordinator of the task force, Dedicatoria died last week at the James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital here where he had been confined for two weeks.

Villa Pablo, Dedicatoria's niece, said the victim contracted the illness while working as a scavenger in the dumpsite for almost 20 years.

Pablo said her uncle was exposed to hazardous and toxic substances that the area contained and which American soldiers left behind.

He was diagnosed to have cancer of the lungs in 2001.

Dedicatoria was buried on Wednesday at the Iram resettlement cemetery.

Timbas said based on the task force's records, four other victims died from last November to March this year.

The fatalities were Rodel Miller, Tita Dominguez, Corazon Toledo, and Marcelo Custodio, who all lived in communities around the former American bases in Subic and Pampanga.

On March 30, two days after Dedicatoria's death, some 60 leaders of the task force in Central Luzon held their fourth national assembly at Gordon Heights here to reiterate their demand for the US government to investigate and clean up toxic and other hazardous wastes left in US military bases in the country.

They said they had joined hands again "to achieve concrete and tactical gains in uplifting the plight and squalid conditions of communities and people who had been victimized" by hazardous contamination of former US bases in the country. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Exec says 4 Turks 'mistaken identity' victims

COTABATO CITY—The four Turkish nationals seized by immigration agents here on Wednesday night would soon be freed and reunited with their families, the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) said.

Engineer Zamzamin Ampatuan, OMA executive director, said the four—Mansur Omercikoglu, Ahmet Kaya, Alpaslan Gul and Ismael Kocabiyik—were now undergoing interrogation at the naval intelligence office in Manila.

"Soon they will be reunited with their families, the immigration officials found not enough evidence that would link the four to terror groups or they made any violation to (sic) immigration laws," Ampatuan told the INQUIRER.

He added that the arrest was a case of mistaken identity.

Ampatuan and the Turkish ambassador to the Philippines have been coordinating with national security officials to ensure the four would be "in good hands."

Annie May, Filipino wife of Omercikoglu, deplored how her husband and his companions were treated when they were taken at about 10 p.m.

"As if we were criminals, as if they have violated any Philippine laws," the wife said. "They have no arrest warrants, they have no search warrants," she said, adding that the raiding team only presented a mission order from immigration chief Alipio Fernandez.

"Besides, in that order, the subject of their arrest were not those of my husband and his companions," she said.

She said the warrant carried the names of Tariff Khan, Mohammad and several others.

"They would not listen to me when I insisted that the names in Fernandez's mission order were different," she recalled, adding that the raiding operatives also barged into their rooms.

Annie May said her husband studied in Ateneo de Zamboanga and earned a masteral degree in education. He put up a school there then moved to Cotabato City where he helped Ampatuan run the Eeman Institute in Barangay Tamontaka here.

"Definitely, they are good guys working for us," Ampatuan said. "They are educators and have legally established residence here." *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

PHOTO COURTESY OF DOMINADOR MEDROSO

CHILDREN frolic around a 2-ton, 12-meter long whale shark that was caught by fishermen when it strayed into San Miguel Bay in Camarines Sur.

Whale shark strays into bay, caught by fishermen, freed

CALABANGA, Camarines Sur—Three fishermen caught a 2,000-kg whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) at about 11 p.m. Wednesday when it got astray near the shore of San Miguel Bay.

The fishermen freed it at about 8 a.m. the following day, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources reported.

Mayor Ruben Medroso, who identified the fishermen as Zaldy and Isagani Roscas and a certain Nestor Valderama, said the 12-meter-long whale shark was not harmed and was towed to the shore until BFAR authorities came.

Fisheries technologists Rose Intia and Ernesto Morales made an identification of the species and notified the BFAR regional office, which sent a team that documented the whale shark and ordered its release into the open sea.

Medroso said the local government unit of this town has pledged to give incentives to the fishermen based on an ordinance that aims to protect and preserve endangered sea creatures.

The whale shark released in the open sea was the first case documented of a whale shark reaching the area of San Miguel Bay.

Valderama said they had just gone out to the sea and cast their fishing nets when a creature of enormous size came their way.

He said they were nervous at the sight of the sea creature moving about underneath the sea.

He said one of them swam and dived cautiously into the waters to further investigate what the creature was and he was surprised that it was so gentle.

Valderama said his companions swam to the rear of the gentle creature with the intention of capturing it by tying the tail with a nylon rope.

The creature did not resist until it was securely tied to the outrigger of the motor banca.

He said the giant fish was so resilient that they were able to tow it near the shallow waters of San Miguel Bay with no resistance.

The BFAR team that inspected the whale shark found the sea creature in sound condition even as it had been towed a quarter of a kilometer from where it was caught. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bet claims she foiled slay try

COTABATO CITY—A mayoral candidate here claimed her security escort foiled an attempt to assassinate her Thursday afternoon while campaigning at the city's public market.

Army Cpl. Jerry Jabison of the 603rd Infantry Brigade shot dead SPO3 Danny Mohamad after the policeman, who was in civilian clothes, allegedly pulled his hand gun and moved toward mayoral candidate Estrellita "Neng" Juliano at about 5:30 p.m.

Juliano said she was directed by Jabison to stop her campaign and immediately get inside the van after he saw Jabison coming with his cal. 45 pistol. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Subic reports more tourists coming in

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—More than 900,000 tourists flocked to this former American naval base in the last two months, boosting tourism here by 11 percent compared to the same period in 2003.

Records from the tourism department of Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority showed 968,709 visitors came here in January and February, compared to 871,575 for the same period last year.

SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo said the increase in the number of visitors could be attributed to the recent opening of new attractions inside this freeport.

"New places to visit like the Zoobic Safari, the butterfly garden and new add-ons like night trekking adventures have attracted more local and foreign tourists," he said.

In February alone, 493,159 local and foreign tourists came here, a 20 percent increase compared to last year's 411,299 visitors for the same month.

"Our new attractions here like the Zoobic Safari are bringing in more visitors from all over," Payumo said.

He said aside from the new attractions, tourists prefer to visit Subic because of its proximity to Manila and its tight security.

"Both foreign and local tourists come down here for a lot of reasons—the nice places to see and visit, good accommodations and closeness to Manila but the one thing we are proud of is that when they are here they know that they are safe and secured," he said. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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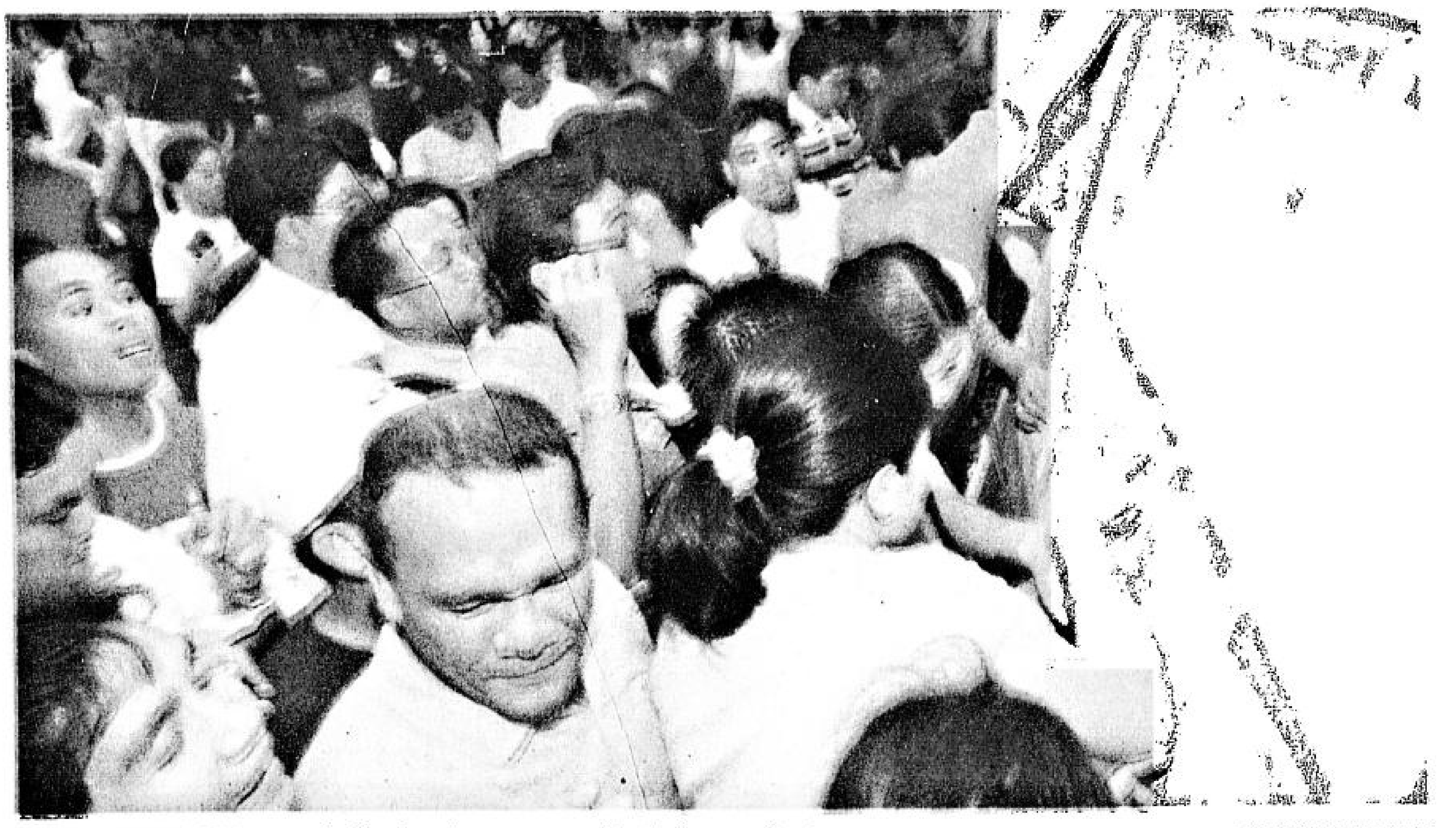
NEW LAWYERS celebrate success with a tight hug



ANXIOUS EXAMINEES go over the list of new lawyers as posted by the Supreme Court.

PHOTOS BY ROGER MARGALLO

Atenean tops bar exam

From page A1

He joins the roster of former Villaraza & Angangco partners who have topped the bar, namely Supreme Court Justice Antonio T. Carpio (No. 6), former Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino J. Cruz, Jr. (No. 7), Ombudsman Simeon V. Marcelo (No. 5), Court of Appeals Justice Celia Librea-Leagogo (No. 5) and Cosme Rosell (No. 1).

Diaz, 25, a consistent honor student is the nephew of slain Ninoy Aquino International Airport assistant general manager Lilia Diaz.

Diaz said he was watching a movie yesterday when he learned he had topped the bar. He said he did not expect to be the bar topnotcher.

Also an economics graduate of the University of the Philippines, Diaz said he was offering his feat to his entire family, especially to his late father, also a lawyer, who died when he was in law school.

Out of the 5,349 examinees, only 1,108 passed the exams. Associate Justice Jose Vitug, chair of the 2003 bar exams committee, said the number of those who passed represents 20.71 percent of the total examinees.

Last year's bar exams became controversial after it was discovered that there was a leakage in the questions for the Mercantile Law subject.

The Supreme Court decided to nullify the exam for Mercantile Law and allocated its 15 percentage points to the seven other bar exam subjects.

Besides Diaz, the other successful examinees who made it to the top ten were Ateneo De Manila's Harvey Lawrence N. Dychiao with a grade of 87.5890 percent; San Beda College students Saben Loyola, 87.2995 percent, and Mark Oliver M. Karaan, 85.3590 percent; Ateneo de Manila students Sabrina Kate D. Paner, 85.1795 percent, and Dorothy B. Dizon, 85.1215 percent; University of the Philippines's Mani Thess Q. Peña, 85.0600 percent; Ateneo de Davao's Melissa Romana P. Suarez, 85.0025 percent; San Sebastian College's Henry M. Francisco, 84.8250 percent; and Bicol Colleges' Jose C. Evan with 84.6490 percent.

"This is the best *talaga!* I'll really work hard to show that I'm worth number 7," said Peña, the only UP student to make it to the top ten.

She was one of the first examinees who trooped to the SC to check the results. While others shrieked seeing their names on the list, Peña tried to hold back tears while she shared the good news with someone on the phone.

Peña said she was surprised that she was the only UP student among the top 10 successful examinees.

"We prepared well *naman. Babawi kami* (We'll make up for it) next year," said Peña, who works for the Castillo, Lamantan, Pantaleon, and San Jose law offices.

Records from the Office of the Bar Confidant showed that in 2002, only 917 of the 4,659 examinees or 19.68 percent passed the bar exams.

In 2001, a total of 1,266, or 32.89 percent, of the 3,849 examinees passed.

In 2000, only 20.84 percent or 979 of the total 4,698 hurdled the bar exams.

Bar Confidant Attorney Ma. Cristina Layusa said the successful examinees are expected to take their oath on April 30 at 2:30 p.m. at the Philippine International Convention Center. They are required to secure their respective clearances from the Office of the Bar Confidant beginning April 12 until April 29.

Alunan blames gov't for Maynilad woes

From page A1

ment's attempts to collect unpaid concession fees of P8 billion from Maynilad's performance bond.

Explaining the disadvantageous features of the concession agreement in his memo, Alunan said the MWSS had claimed in 1997 that non-revenue water (NRW, wasted or unbilled water) was 57 percent when it actually stood at 69.5 percent.

He said the MWSS had also advised Maynilad that the pipes in its concession were approximately 2,500 kms long when they were actually 3,700 kms long.

Leaky pipes

And finally, he said Maynilad had to assume 90 percent of the $900 million debt that the MWSS was servicing at that time.

Alunan said that the longer length of the pipes in the Maynilad concession area meant that the cost estimates for the repair and replacement of old pipes were unrealistic and that there were more leaky pipes to steal water from.

He said the engineering maps that the MWSS had given Maynilad were outdated and incomplete, making their engineers unable to pinpoint pipe locations under the repaired or expanded streets and redesigned urban areas.

Corrupted data

Alunan added that the MWSS's billings and collections records were also incomplete and disorderly.

"At the start, no one knew the aging of receivables. No one was penalized for late payments. After a subsidiary ledger was finally put in place when I discovered that none existed, more than a third in accounts receivable (AR) were found to be in excess of one year," he said.

"Moreover, the [accounts receivable] were unwittingly inflated by repeated billings of terminated or non-existing accounts which artificially deflated NRW," he added.

Alunan said that once the corrupted data were purged and records corrected, the NRW "increased to realistic levels."

He said that under the rules of the privatization agreement, the MWSS was obliged to cooperate with the concessionaire for the latter to become viable. This the state agency did not do, he said.

He said the government also failed to mobilize government agencies to help the utility reduce the amount of non-revenue water.

He noted that fixing pipes and laying down new ones required digging permits from local governments and national government agencies. Water pilferage was a law enforcement concern, he added.

"In the first five years of operations, it took Maynilad between four to six months on average to receive any kind of digging permit, yet Maynilad has been held accountable for NRW," Alunan said.

"The failure to catch, prosecute and punish water thieves, on the other hand, has only emboldened them to commit more of their felonious acts," he added.

Favored contractors

Alunan also said that the MWSS ignored Maynilad's recommendations for it to drop its "favored contractors" for their repeated failures and its suppliers who were "notorious for overpriced and poor quality products."

As this developed, senatorial candidate Melanio "Batas" Mauricio yesterday accused the government of allegedly deliberately hiding from the Quezon City regional trial court, which is acting as the rehabilitation court in the Maynilad case, two vital documents related to the impending takeover of Maynilad.

In an urgent motion filed with the Ombudsman's office, Mauricio sought the indefinite suspension of Justice Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee and MWSS officials whom he accused of allegedly "conspiring to destroy records of their criminal activities."

Mauricio, who is running under the Alyansa ng Pag-asa ticket of Raul Roco, has filed plunder and graft charges against President Macapagal-Arroyo in connection with the Maynilad deal.

Premature suit

The Supreme Court earlier dismissed another suit filed by Mauricio asking the high court to order the Quezon City regional court to make public the details of the compromise deal with Maynilad. The high court said the petition was premature as the lower court had not issued any order prohibiting public disclosure of the terms of the agreement.

In yesterday's motion, Mauricio claimed that the Quezon City regional court was not furnished with copies of two sensitive documents that would have proved that the deal was indeed aimed at bailing out Maynilad.

These documents were: MWSS Resolution No. 03-035-CA, dated Nov. 28, 2003 and the notice of termination that the MWSS issued pursuant to Resolution No. 03-035-CA.

The senatorial candidate claimed that in the first resolution, the MWSS board had actually ordered the MWSS management to terminate the concession agreement with Maynilad.

He said it was unanimously signed by the members of the regulatory office—Eduardo Santos, Angel Efren Agustin, Cristeto Dinopol, Jr., Randolf Sacai and Emmanuel Asable.

Based on the resolution, MWSS issued the second document—the notice of event termination—against Maynilad as early as November 2003, he said.

Not enforced

"However, for some mysterious reasons, the MWSS refuses to enforce the resolution," he said.

Mauricio claimed that the resolution was favorable to consumers because once the notices were served to Maynilad, the water utility would have had to immediately pay P3.5 billion as so-called termination fee.

He said termination of the concession by MWSS would not free Maynilad from other liabilities such as paying the P8 billion in unpaid concession fees, the P10 to 11 billion in loans and the amounts it had collected as foreign currency adjustments, among others.

"If the resolution were enforced, the Maynilad would be simply required to pay up and then the government takes over without any [strings attached]. So based on the resolution, the concession agreement had been effectively terminated thus preventing ay move to rehabilitate Maynilad," Mauricio claimed in a phone interview.

He asked Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo to immediately take custody of the supposed documents pertaining to to the concession agreement between the MWSS and Maynilad, to prevent "unscrupulous people, all involved in the implementation of the anomalous amendments of the concession agreement ... are now conspiring to destroy records of their criminal activities."

A comedy, KNP says of FPJ flap with reporter

From page A1

holding a huge audience under his spell," she said.

At about 6:15 p.m. on Thursday in Tigbauan 22 km south of Iloilo, Poe was in the middle of a campaign speech at the gymnasium when he turned to Aguinaldo, offered her the microphone and asked her if she wanted to say something.

The reporter, who was standing at the side of the stage a few meters behind Poe, was about to do a "stand-upper" or on-the-scene report.

Reporters backstage heard Poe telling Aguinaldo: *"Gusto mo yatang magsalita ... ikaw na, ikaw na."*

After Aguinaldo retreated, Poe resumed his speech. But he abruptly ended it after a few seconds and turned over the microphone to actor Eddie Garcia.

Not angry

Aguinaldo later told other reporters that Sotto and Poe's running mate Sen. Loren Legarda then approached her and demanded that she apologize to the actor.

Later Thursday night in Iloilo City, Escudero told reporters that Poe was not angry with Aguinaldo.

"It was clearly a misunderstanding," Escudero said. He surmised that Poe "wanted to put some sense into what was going on behind him without any intention whatsoever of embarrassing" the reporter.

He said Poe was apparently surprised to see someone standing behind him onstage and the lights of a TV camera being switched on.

Escudero said the KNP had "accepted [Aguinaldo's] stand that she didn't intend to distract the crowd, much less [Poe], in the same manner that I hope it was accepted that [Poe] didn't mean to embarrass Sandra by what he did."

He expressed hope that the matter would "end there."

In the same vein, Sotto urged reporters to forget the issue.

Asked whether he saw a need for Aguinaldo to apologize, he said the incident was nothing but an "April Fool's Day" joke.

'We love you'

Asked again whether he had indeed asked GMA 7 to assign a new reporter to cover Poe's campaign, Sotto replied in the negative. "We're not even talking about it," he said.

Legarda told Aguinaldo that, being a "peacemaker," she was just trying to patch things up between Poe and the reporter.

"*Mahal na mahal ka namin* (We love you very much)," she told Aguinaldo. "You're very professional, and we don't want to lose your friendship."

Legarda also said that while Sotto mentioned the need for an apology by Aguinaldo, she herself thought this was not necessary.

But in Aguinaldo's opinion, "what happened tells a lot about [Poe]."

"I will leave it at that," she said, adding that she had been instructed by her superiors to stay put and cover the actor's campaign.

Garcia, a constant companion of Poe's in campaign sorties, told reporters that the rally should have been covered without distracting "the speaker."

He said Aguinaldo's action had surprised Poe.

Asked whether Poe was angry at Aguinaldo, Garcia shot back: "*Nagalit ba kahapon* (Did he get angry on Thursday)?"

Expectedly, the other presidential candidates had something to say on the incident.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself refused to comment when interviewed by radio dyOK in Iloilo City yesterday. But her campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor said the public was "smart" enough to discern the difference between her vaunted short fuse and Poe's supposed ill-temper.

According to Defensor, Ms Macapagal gets annoyed only by inefficiencies related to her work and not by being booted out of the limelight.

"Her temper is work- and efficiency-related," Defensor said. "She's never mad at the person but the action or inaction. She has never, in the two years I've worked with her, belittled a person or looked down on anyone. After the temper subsides, she forgets everything."

Ms Macapagal's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said that as a former journalist, he commiserated with Aguinaldo.

"Based on what I saw, she was just doing her job, and we should not berate anybody for doing his or her job," he said.

But he expressed the belief that Filipinos were more mature and that, in voting, "they would choose the one who has better programs rather than a better personality."

In Cardona, Rizal, Alyansa ng Pag-asa standard-bearer Raul Roco told reporters that Poe's behavior showed his true nature.

"Somebody said we need a heart [to understand the poor]. Now the people saw what's truly in his heart," Roco said, adding:

'Ang pikon, talo'

"*Nguyon nakikita na kung sino ang mataray. Ang pikon, talo. Ang tunay na pikon, talo. Puwede na natin siyang tawaging 'hari ng pikon'* (Now we know who is snooty. The bad-tempered is a loser. Now we can call him the 'king of the bad-tempered')."

Roco also said: "The members of the working press should be given respect because you are the mirror; you merely reflect what you see. Is it the fault of the mirror if it shows a pimple on one's face? Obviously not."

In Legazpi City, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the other opposition presidential candidate, said he would not get angry with reporters covering his campaign.

But he said he understood why Poe lost his temper on Thursday.

"Everybody reaches a [boiling] point," he said. "It's either the stress or the pressure getting to you."

Lacson said what had happened to Aguinaldo was "unfortunate and regrettable."

In San Fernando, Pampanga, Bangon Pilipinas standard-bearer Eddie Villanueva gave a "simple" explanation on why Poe lost his cool: "Perhaps it was because the campaign has already heated up. Secondly, there were many politicians, and he was quite tired. Then it's easy to lose self-control."

Villanueva said voters should "understand some politicians who might be exhausted by now."

"What is important now is that we are united in ensuring a clean election, and let the Filipino people choose their leaders without coercion and without fraud," the evangelist said.

But the NUJP recalled that it was not the first time that Poe had vented his anger on a member of the media. It said Poe had earlier grabbed the camera of a Reuters photographer, "merely because he thought it was insolent of a photographer to take his picture with a poster of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the background."

With reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr., TJ Burgonio, and Norman Bordadora; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Raj Padilla, PDI Visayas Bureau

Government taking Janjalani seriously

From page A1

Pakistan, and possibly financial support from the al-Qaida terror network through the Southeast Asia-based Jemaah Islamiya group.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday chaired a briefing by the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency to assess the threat of terrorism. Also present were former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos, Senate President Franklin Drilon and House Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Ermita said the participants agreed that the recent capture of six alleged terrorists planning bomb attacks to duplicate the Madrid train blasts of March 11 was a "wake-up" call for the government that the terrorist threat had arrived in Metro Manila.

Nearly 200 were killed last month when militants linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network bombed commuter trains in the Spanish capital.

Drilon and De Venecia said they would immediately refile their respective bills on antiterrorism in the next Congress. These pieces of legislation were stalled in the congressional committees.

List of targets

A supposed list of targets confiscated from one of the suspects mentioned a popular shopping mall, the Pandacan oil depot and commuter trains in the metropolis as among areas the Abu Sayyaf planned to hit.

Janjalani, in an interview with the Inquirer, said he had many volunteers willing to undergo training on use of explosives and suggested the training had been going on since 2002.

He said they were being trained for missions that could involve "death through martyrdom." He denied they were suicide bombers.

Ermita, who also heads a newly organized antiterror task force, said six Abu Sayyaf suspects captured this week for plotting bomb attacks in Metro Manila had confessed that they were recruiting Muslim converts because they would not stand out and arouse suspicion, Agence France Presse said.

"One important revelation is that the 'return-to-Islam' Filipinos, who were (former) Christians ... their converts, have been trained (in the southern Philippines) to handle explosives," AFP quoted Ermita as saying.

He said these converts were chosen because "they will not be easily suspected to be terrorists," adding that two who had escaped were also members of the movement.

The wife of one of the six suspected Abu Sayyaf members had said they were Muslim converts but denied they were involved in terrorism.

Ermita brushed aside allegations by the political opposition that the terror threat was being exaggerated to boost President Macapagal-Arroyo's image just before the May 10 presidential elections.

Janjalani moving around

Maj. Gen. Trifonio Salazar said that Janjalani, believed to be in hiding in Central Mindanao, "has been moving around those areas to recruit more members."

"He could not muster great support and establish more contacts because we keep on operating in those areas," said the acting Southern Command chief and 1st Tabak Infantry Division commander.

The military official did not say what sort of training Janjalani was giving the recruits.

He said Janjalani's recruitment target was young males, but "every time he tries to establish contacts with this group, *nauunahan na namin* (we get to them first)."

Asked why Janjalani has not been arrested despite the military's claim it knows his whereabouts, Salazar said: "We are just waiting for the right timing."

At Camp Aguinaldo, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Public Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero was skeptical about Janjalani's claims.

Lucero told reporters that Janjalani "cannot substantiate this claim."

"We still believe that the Abu Sayyaf has not yet reached the ideological sophistication where any member of the group will sacrifice their lives for what they believe in," Lucero said.

Weak loyalty

He also said loyalty among Abu Sayyaf members was weak and that information from some captured terrorists had led to the arrests of the others.

Lucero cited the cases of bandit leaders Commander Robot, Kalaw Jajalis, Abu Sabaya and Michael Pajiji, whose arrests or death followed information taken from other ASG members.

"We have interviewed some neutralized members of its urban terrorist group and they do not believe the statement of Khadaffy Janjalani," Lucero said.

Lucero doubted that any new ASG batch of trainees would be ready to carry out bombing attacks in the metropolis.

"We believe they are training them to manufacture bombs, but still we doubt that any member of that group will be ready now to sacrifice their lives," he said. "We believe they don't have any reason to sacrifice their lives."

He also said that Islamic extremists normally had a role model to emulate. But in the case of the ASG, "they have no role model."

Lucero also said the training of a "martyr," or suicide bomber, would take years of indoctrination and technical education.

"Training a would-be martyr takes a lot of years," he said. "It normally starts from when the member is still young. So we doubt this claim of Janjalani, given the fact that some of his members do not believe in him."

He added that the military had not received any information to confirm a newspaper report that 50 ASG members were already in Metro Manila.

In a sermon in Cotabato City, a Muslim preacher appealed to the Muslim youth to reject any Abu Sayyaf attempt to recruit them for bomb training.

"Be rational," Ustadz Muhammad Sulaiman said. "Islam is the religion of reason and not of fanaticism." *With Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

More Abu suspects fall in antiterror crackdown

By Alcuin Papa, Gil Cabacungan Jr., Christian Esguerra, Julie S. Alipala

ONE BY ONE they fall.

But the question in the local Muslim community is: Were all those picked up by the military and police—totaling 10 so far—genuine Abu Sayyaf terrorists?

In a further crackdown on the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), four alleged terrorists were arrested the other day in Zamboanga City while preparing to slip out to Malaysia, the military said yesterday.

One of the four was identified as Nasser Hapilon, 40, an elder brother of senior Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon—one of five ASG commanders for whose capture the United States has offered a reward of $5 million.

The four were arrested in a raid before noon on their hideout in Rio Hondo Aplaya, Zamboanga, said Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio.

The operation was conducted by elements of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 11, naval intelligence and Military Intelligence Group 9.

"The suspects were waiting for the availability of sea vessel bound for Malaysia when (we were) tipped off by local residents," said Commodore George Uy, commander of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao.

An initial military report identified the three others as Hamid Abdulbasar, alias Hamid and Kasir Ibrahim, 31, of Sta. Catalina, Zamboanga City; Jumadil Abdulhan, 25, of Aplaya, Zamboanga City; and Julpikar Abdulbassar, 24, of Ulami, Basilan.

Teodosio presented Hapilon and Hamid to media yesterday at the Southern Command headquarters in Zamboanga City.

The detained Hapilon was allegedly involved in the kidnapping of 15 workers of the Golden Harvest Plantation in Lantawan, Basilan, in 2001. The Abu Sayyaf later beheaded two workers as an "Independence Day gift" to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Military investigators have yet to reveal the purpose of the four suspects' trip to Malaysia, a neighboring Muslim country which those wanted by the Philippines has often used as a hiding place.

Ms Macapagal, facing a tough election battle in May, yesterday defended the crackdown on terrorists as legitimate, denying its aim was to persecute a particular religious sect or gain her political mileage.

"Terrorism is a crime against all humanity, and there are no political or religious undertones to the antiterror campaign," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

The President urged those who claimed the suspected were framed to pursue their case in court.

"As far as I am concerned, the apprehension of these suspected terrorists is a product of diligence and hard work on the part of the police and the military, which deserves full commendation and praise," the President said.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the terrorist suspects would be presented to the media after the authorities had completed their "tactical interrogation."

Ermita said the government would also present state witnesses whose testimonies were instrumental in the arrests of the alleged terrorists.

"These state witnesses have been their captives for one year and they pointed to some of the terrorists as their guards," Ermita said. "We will make them available to prove our point but we will not show their faces on camera for their protection."

Relatives of some of the men arrested in Metro Manila have also denied the suspects had any link with Abu Sayyaf, whose mercenary tactics became notorious during high-profile kidnappings in 2000 and 2001.

Islamic community leaders denounced the arrests and accused the government of using minority Muslims as "sacrificial lambs," the Associated Press said. *With reports from Anthony S. Allada, PDI M*indanao bureau; AP, Reuters

PAGC clears press undersecretary

From page A1

tive Secretary Alberto Romulo, upheld the PAGC's March 29 resolution that found no basis for charging Suva for not declaring a 1999-model Toyota Tamaraw in her SAL. Romulo ordered the case dismissed and Suva cleared, according to President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

But the harm has been done. Suva—"Tita Ching" to reporters covering Malacañang—was unable to report for work for more than a month and had to be hospitalized.

Suva, who has served Malacañang for 42 years since the term of the late President Diosdado Macapagal, came close to tears when she heard the news.

"I have forgiven them," she said of those behind the graft complaint. What was more important for her, she said, was to clear her name.

Suva declined to talk about what she had gone through, but people close to her said she was extremely depressed, lost her appetite, and refused to leave her house.

Rectification

Bunye, who announced the dismissal of the complaint at yesterday's briefing, left it to the media to undo the damage done by the PAGC, an agency under the Office of the President.

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Lifestyle check

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She also claimed that NAKTF operatives were behind the killing of customs bureau official Clemente Heraldo, who was gunned down by unidentified armed men in Pandacan, Manila, last Thursday.

Ramoso said the gunmen were among those killed by NAKTF members in the Navotas shoot-out that killed the young Gallando.

"You see, there is a pattern here. Heraldo is an agent of Reyes in the newly formed anti-smuggling task force. He was ordered killed by Reyes after he exceeded his usefulness. Those who killed him were likewise liquidated by another NAKTF cell," she said in Filipino in a telephone interview with the Inquirer.

The Inquirer tried but failed to reach Reyes through his mobile phone.

Hours after the shooting of Heraldo, who headed the internal inquiry and prosecution division of the Bureau of Customs, four suspected members of the Allan Balimbingan kidnap-for-ransom gang were killed in the encounter with the NAKTF in Navotas.

Ramoso said the four were actually related to the "Villaber-Ramoso" group.

She said she learned from NAKTF operatives close to her husband that Heraldo was helping Reyes pin down smugglers at the customs bureau.

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Ramoso, who called up the Inquirer, said that there were actually seven people who kidnapped Ledesma's children, allegedly on orders of Reyes.

Of the seven, she said her husband, his friend Edwin Pastrana, Roland Sarmiento and another unnamed NAKTF member are dead. She said three are alive and one, fearful for his life, was ready to come forward.

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She also noted that a picture that Ramoso produced of her husband and Reyes appeared to have been "computer-generated," noting that the images of the two people shown had differing shades of color.

Ramoso recently filed two cases of graft, terrorism, kidnapping, multiple murder and planting of evidence against Reyes, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya, PNP spokesperson Supt. Joel Goltiao, Ang-See and other officials before the Ombudsman's office.

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NAKTF officials have said that the four, who were linked to the kidnapping of Jethro Chua, were killed in a legitimate encounter just before Chua was rescued.

According to Ramoso, the killing of the four and others implicated in kidnapping activities in the country was intended to "artificially create an atmosphere of violence ... to scare the Filipino-Chinese community."

According to NAKTF records, the Allan Balimbingan gang is a subgroup of the Waray-Waray gang and operates mostly in Tondo, Antipolo and Fairview.

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Government taking Janjalani seriously

From page A1

Pakistan, and possibly financial support from the al-Qaida terror network through the Southeast Asia-based Jemaah Islamiya group.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday chaired a briefing by the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency to assess the threat of terrorism. Also present were former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos, Senate President Franklin Drilon and House Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Ermita said the participants agreed that the recent capture of six alleged terrorists planning bomb attacks to duplicate the Madrid train blasts of March 11 was a "wake-up" call for the government that the terrorist threat had arrived in Metro Manila.

Nearly 200 were killed last month when militants linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network bombed commuter trains in the Spanish capital.

Drilon and De Venecia said they would immediately refile their respective bills on antiterrorism in the next Congress. These pieces of legislation were stalled in the congressional committees.

List of targets

A supposed list of targets confiscated from one of the suspects mentioned a popular shopping mall, the Pandacan oil depot and commuter trains in the metropolis as among areas the Abu Sayyaf planned to hit.

Janjalani, in an interview with the INQUIRER, said he had many volunteers willing to undergo training on use of explosives and suggested the training had been going on since 2002.

He said they were being trained for missions that could involve "death through martyrdom." He denied they were suicide bombers.

Ermita, who also heads a newly organized antiterror task force, said six Abu Sayyaf suspects captured this week for plotting bomb attacks in Metro Manila had confessed that they were recruiting Muslim converts because they would not stand out and arouse suspicion, Agence France Presse said.

"One important revelation is that the 'return-to-Islam' Filipinos, who were (former) Christians ... their converts, have been trained (in the southern Philippines) to handle explosives," AFP quoted Ermita as saying.

He said these converts were chosen because "they will not be easily suspected to be terrorists," adding that two who had escaped were also members of the movement.

The wife of one of the six suspected Abu Sayyaf members had said they were Muslim converts but denied they were involved in terrorism.

Ermita brushed aside allegations by the political opposition that the terror threat was being exaggerated to boost President Macapagal-Arroyo's image just before the May 10 presidential elections.

Janjalani moving around

Maj. Gen. Trifonio Salazar said that Janjalani, believed to be in hiding in Central Mindanao, "has been moving around those areas to recruit more members."

"He could not muster great support and establish more contacts because we keep on operating in those areas," said the acting Southern Command chief and 1st Tabak Infantry Division commander.

The military official did not say what sort of training Janjalani was giving the recruits.

He said Janjalani's recruitment target was young males, but "every time he tries to establish contacts with this group, *nauunahan na namin* (we get to them first)."

Asked why Janjalani has not been arrested despite the military's claim it knows his whereabouts, Salazar said: "We are just waiting for the right timing."

At Camp Aguinaldo, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Public Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero was skeptical about Janjalani's claims.

Lucero told reporters that Janjalani "cannot substantiate this claim."

"We still believe that the Abu Sayyaf has not yet reached the ideological sophistication where any member of the group will sacrifice their lives for what they believe in," Lucero said.

Weak loyalty

He also said loyalty among Abu Sayyaf members was weak and that information from some captured terrorists had led to the arrests of the others.

Lucero cited the cases of bandit leaders Commander Robot, Kalaw Jajalis, Abu Sabaya and Michael Pajiji, whose arrests or death followed information taken from other ASG members.

"We have interviewed some neutralized members of its urban terrorist group and they do not believe the statement of Khadaffy Janjalani," Lucero said.

Lucero doubted that any new ASG batch of trainees would be ready to carry out bombing attacks in the metropolis.

"We believe they are training them to manufacture bombs, but still we doubt that any member of that group will be ready now to sacrifice their lives," he said. "We believe they don't have any reason to sacrifice their lives."

He also said that Islamic extremists normally had a role model to emulate. But in the case of the ASG, "they have no role model."

Lucero also said the training of a "martyr," or suicide bomber, would take years of indoctrination and technical education.

"Training a would-be martyr takes a lot of years," he said. "It normally starts from when the member is still young. So we doubt this claim of Janjalani, given the fact that some of his members do not believe in him."

He added that the military had not received any information to confirm a newspaper report that 50 ASG members were already in Metro Manila.

In a sermon in Cotabato City, a Muslim preacher appealed to the Muslim youth to reject any Abu Sayyaf attempt to recruit them for bomb training.

"Be rational," Ustadz Muhammad Sulaiman said. "Islam is the religion of reason and not of fanaticism." *With Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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More Abu suspects fall in antiterror crackdown

By Alcuin Papa, Gil Cabacungan Jr., Christian Esguerra, Julie S. Alipala

ONE BY ONE they fall.

But the question in the local Muslim community is: Were all those picked up by the military and police—totaling 10 so far—genuine Abu Sayyaf terrorists?

In a further crackdown on the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), four alleged terrorists were arrested the other day in Zamboanga City while preparing to slip out to Malaysia, the military said yesterday.

One of the four was identified as Nasser Hapilon, 40, an elder brother of senior Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon—one of five ASG commanders for whose capture the United States has offered a reward of $5 million.

The four were arrested in a raid before noon on their hideout in Rio Hondo Aplaya, Zamboanga, said Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio.

The operation was conducted by elements of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 11, naval intelligence and Military Intelligence Group 9.

"The suspects were waiting for the availability of sea vessel bound for Malaysia when (we were) tipped off by local residents," said Commodore George Uy, commander of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao.

An initial military report identified the three others as Hamid Abdulbasar, alias Hamid and Kasir Ibrahim, 31, of Sta. Catalina, Zamboanga City; Jumadil Abdulhan, 25, of Aplaya, Zamboanga City; and Julpikar Abdulbassar, 24, of Ulami, Basilan.

Teodosio presented Hapilon and Hamid to media yesterday at the Southern Command headquarters in Zamboanga City.

The detained Hapilon was allegedly involved in the kidnapping of 15 workers of the Golden Harvest Plantation in Lantawan, Basilan, in 2001. The Abu Sayyaf later beheaded two workers as an "Independence Day gift" to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Military investigators have yet to reveal the purpose of the four suspects' trip to Malaysia, a neighboring Muslim country which those wanted by the Philippines has often used as a hiding place.

Ms Macapagal, facing a tough election battle in May, yesterday defended the crackdown on terrorists as legitimate, denying its aim was to persecute a particular religious sect or gain her political mileage.

"Terrorism is a crime against all humanity, and there are no political or religious undertones to the antiterror campaign," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

The President urged those who claimed the suspected were framed to pursue their case in court.

"As far as I am concerned, the apprehension of these suspected terrorists is a product of diligence and hard work on the part of the police and the military, which deserves full commendation and praise," the President said.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the terrorist suspects would be presented to the media after the authorities had completed their "tactical interrogation."

Ermita said the government would also present state witnesses whose testimonies were instrumental in the arrests of the alleged terrorists.

"These state witnesses have been their captives for one year and they pointed to some of the terrorists as their guards," Ermita said. "We will make them available to prove our point but we will not show their faces on camera for their protection."

Relatives of some of the men arrested in Metro Manila have also denied the suspects had any link with Abu Sayyaf, whose mercenary tactics became notorious during high-profile kidnappings in 2000 and 2001.

Islamic community leaders denounced the arrests and accused the government of using minority Muslims as "sacrificial lambs," the Associated Press said. *With reports from Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao bureau; AP, Reuters*

PAGC clears press undersecretary

From page A1

tive Secretary Alberto Romulo, upheld the PAGC's March 29 resolution that found no basis for charging Suva for not declaring a 1999-model Toyota Tamaraw in her SAL. Romulo ordered the case dismissed and Suva cleared, according to President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

But the harm has been done. Suva—"Tita Ching" to reporters covering Malacañang—was unable to report for work for more than a month and had to be hospitalized.

Suva, who has served Malacañang for 42 years since the term of the late President Diosdado Macapagal, came close to tears when she heard the news.

"I have forgiven them," she said of those behind the graft complaint. What was more important for her, she said, was to clear her name.

Suva declined to talk about what she had gone through, but people close to her said she was extremely depressed, lost her appetite, and refused to leave her house.

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FOUR DIGIT
4 9 3 3
(In exact order)
SUERTRES
8 6 2

MEGALOTTO 6/45
12 19 23 26 33 38

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METRO
SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2004
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

PRUDENTIAL BANK ROBBERS

They entered through the bathroom window

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE PRUDENTIAL Bank and Trust Company in Sampaloc, Manila, fell prey to unexpected visitors—six robbers who entered through the bank's bathroom window after cutting a hole through the ceiling and roof of an adjacent motel before dawn yesterday.

The robbers even cut off the alarm, electricity and telephone lines before going inside the bank along España Street, said Sampaloc police station commander Senior Supt. Manolo Martinez.

Once inside, the suspects used an acetylene torch, a drill and crowbars to pry open the vault and take the money inside. The suspects even left the said equipment inside the bank.

The vault contained two days' worth of deposits which amounted to less than a million pesos, said Senior Insp. Benjamin Reyes, Theft and Robbery unit chief.

Cased for days

Martinez said the suspects had probably cased the bank and the surrounding area for days before pulling of the theft, which he likened to an "akyat-bahay" (house theft) operation rather than to a bank robbery.

"This is not a case where force or violence was used. (The suspects) are skilled thieves," he said.

He also said that a few years back, a group employing a similar modus operandi had broken into a pawnshop in Manila.

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She added that the men did not give their names and rented the rooms for 12 hours.

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A POLICE investigator points to the hole in the ceiling of the room rented by the suspects. ERIK ARAZAS

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Last year, customs collector Felipe Bartolome was ambushed along the Anda Circle in Manila. Fortunately, he survived the attack although his driver and two police escorts did not. *Leila B. Salaverria*

Death of Mandaluyong inmate worries officials

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Abella said he hopes whoever wins in the coming election would have the project started immediately.

At dawn Thursday, inmate Anacita Baldomer, 47, died of a severe asthma attack, triggered by the heat of summer.

She was rushed by jail authorities to the Mandaluyong Medical Center but she died on the way. *Luige del Puerto*

'I can be as good as any normal person'

By Luige del Puerto

LIFE would surely be easier if 26-year-old Dolor Santiago chooses to go home to San Isidro, Nueve Ecija, where her parents could take care of her.

But Dolor, who has been confined to a wheelchair due to a shrapnel that pierced her spinal column in a grenade blast in 1997, neither wants pity nor an easy life.

She wants to live a life as normal as possible. And she could only fulfill that dream here, far away from ready help.

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Dolor starts the day with a little prayer, then she cooks and exercises to keep her legs in shape, literally.

"I have to exercise because if I don't, my legs will go limp," she told the INQUIRER inside her small, rented room in Marikina City, which she shares with her cousin, Rose. Rose works as a cashier at the Sta. Lucia Mall.

Terror attack

It has been five years since that tragic day. Dolor remembers that day as clear as the summer sun.

"I was waiting for a jeepney near the Philippine Rabbit terminal on Rizal Avenue around 7 p.m. on my way home from work. It was raining very hard. Then suddenly, something exploded. I was hit (by shrapnels) mostly in the back," she said.

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DOLOR would rather wash her own clothes and do other household chores herself rather than rely on others.

DOLOR Santiago irons clothes at her rented apartment in Barangay San Roque, Marikina City. PHOTOS BY TRUDY ESPERAS

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Depression set in. Dolor did not go out of her room for weeks, preferring the company of silence and self-pity.

No to defeat

Then she realized she could not live the rest of her life in defeat.

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From being totally bedridden (her aunt then had to carry her even to the comfort room), Dolor can now walk by herself. She can cook, wash her own clothes, mop the floor, and commute within short distances.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2004

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Metro

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PRUDENTIAL BANK ROBBERS

They entered through the bathroom window

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE PRUDENTIAL Bank and Trust Company in Sampaloc, Manila, fell prey to unexpected visitors—six robbers who entered through the bank's bathroom window after cutting a hole through the ceiling and roof of an adjacent motel before dawn yesterday.

The robbers even cut off the alarm, electricity and telephone lines before going inside the bank along España Street, said Sampaloc police station commander Senior Supt. Manolo Martinez.

Once inside, the suspects used an acetylene torch, a drill and crowbars to pry open the vault and take the money inside. The suspects even left the said equipment inside the bank.

The vault contained two days' worth of deposits which amounted to less than a million pesos, said Senior Insp. Benjamin Reyes, Theft and Robbery unit chief.

Cased for days

Martinez said the suspects had probably cased the bank and the surrounding area for days before pulling of the theft, which he likened to an "akyat-bahay" (house theft) operation rather than to a bank robbery.

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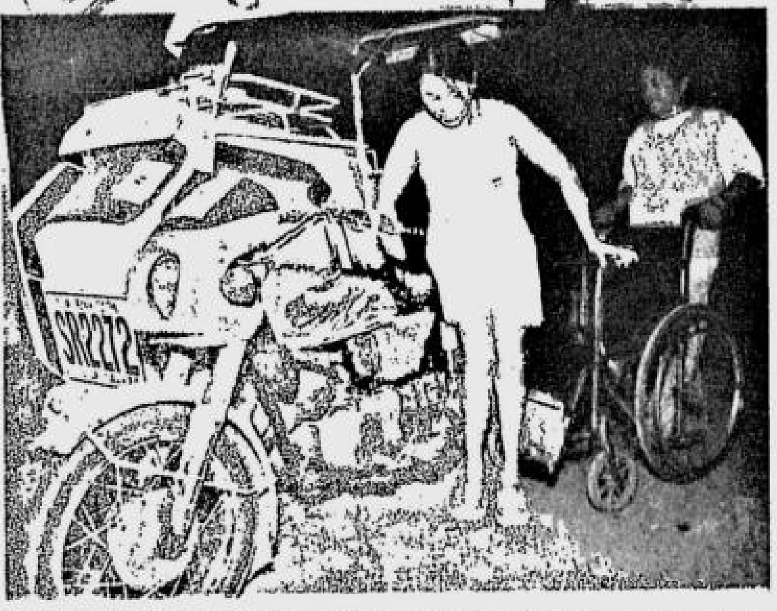

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Kidnappers killed by ISAFP agents

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

BEFORE that complaint by a self-confessed "callboy" about reelectionist Sen. John Osmeña, his sexual preference was hush-hush or a subject of speculation.

How could a manly guy like John O. be gay? incredulous people asked. John O. doesn't chatter like a gay beautician, his wrists don't limp when he talks, he doesn't sway his hips when he walks, so how could he be a homosexual?

Osmeña is like the actor Rock Hudson whose homosexuality and sex perversions became public after he contracted AIDS. In the famous senator's case, it was not the dreaded disease that exposed him but a rape complaint against him by a male prostitute.

* * *

So what if John O. is gay? He makes no bones about it (unlike another senator), but he doesn't flaunt it either.

He hasn't burdened other people; in fact, he's done a lot for his constituents in Cebu City.

The citizenry doesn't care if he's gay so long as his sexual preference doesn't affect his work.

* * *

So what if the male prostitute was telling the truth that he and the senator had sexual relations? What two consenting adults do to each other within the four walls of a bedroom is their business.

The male prostitute's complaint of rape against the senator doesn't hold water. If it's true the senator forced himself upon him, why should he complain when he was paid for it?

And why is the callboy complaining only now when the "rape" supposedly took place several months ago. The delay in the filing of the complaint makes people suspicious because Osmeña is running for reelection.

* * *

Osmeña should, if he gets reelected, introduce laws that would make it illegal to discriminate against gays.

Only a gay can help other gays.

And because John O. wields considerable power and influence, many of his fellow gays in government would come out of their closets.

* * *

The bodies of kidnap suspects who were killed in a shootout on North Bay Boulevard in Navotas were shown on the front pages of newspapers being examined by the police. The impression from that photo was that they were killed by policemen.

But the truth is they were killed by members of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP), whose agents all operate undercover. The ISAFP penetrated a kidnap gang that was planning to abduct the daughter of a rich Chinese who's an official of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Let's give credit where credit is due.

ISAFP has been responsible for many big kidnap gang busts by the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktf). The once-notorious military intelligence unit has been tapped by Naktf as its operating arm.

* * *

It's very hard to believe that Naktf chief Angelo Reyes has had a hand in some kidnap-for-ransom cases.

It's much harder still to believe that Teresita Ang-See, the champion of erstwhile kidnap victims who were mostly Chinese, is trying to cover up for Reyes.

Reyes' critics are trying to destroy him since he has succeeded immensely where his predecessors in anti-kidnapping have failed.

Reyes, a kidnapper? What do you think of him, another Ping Lacson?

Massive anti-smut drive launched

By Tina Santos and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

MEMBERS of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) yesterday conducted a massive sweep of Metro Manila's streets which resulted in the arrest of at least 50 people reportedly selling smut materials.

NCRPO director Ricardo de Leon said thousands of pornographic materials, including VCDs and DVDs and tabloids, were seized during the operation conducted by agents of the newly formed Task Force Magdalena, which is composed of several teams from the five police districts.

The raid was also conducted in cooperation with the Videogram Regulatory Board, Movie and Television Review and Classification Board and local government units, De Leon added.

Pornographic tabloids, such as Boso, Sagad, Hataw, Tigas TT, Bomba, Swabe and Katas, which graphically show naked women and couples performing the sex act, were among those confiscated by the raiding teams, particularly along the stretch of Edsa.

POLICE officials present some of the seized tabloids. JOAN BONDOC

"The publishers of these newspapers, which have been flooding the streets and sidewalks of the metropolis, know that they are violating the law and contributing to the degradation of women," De Leon said.

He pointed out that the seized tabloids have purposely omitted to print their office addresses as well as the names of publishers to avoid identification.

On Wednesday, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group stormed the office of Men Press publishing house on 20th Street, Port Area, Manila, were thousands of smut tabloids were seized and at least 15 employees were arrested.

Accessible to children

Pornographic tabloids have mushroomed in the metropolis in the past month. With suggestive nameplates, these tabloids carry nude photos of women and photos of pairs having sex. Each copy sells at P10.

These smut materials are sold in the streets along with the other newspapers, making it very accessible to children.

The police said they will still file charges against the vendors and the publishers of the smut tabloids.

METROBRIEFS

Sta. Rosa now a city

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has signed into law an act converting the municipality of Santa Rosa in Laguna into a component city to be known as the City of Santa Rosa. Arroyo signed on March 10, 2004 Republic Act No. 9264 which originated in the House of Representatives and finally passed by both chambers on Feb. 7 and Feb. 6, respectively. The INQUIRER has obtained a copy of the Act which was published March 28-April 3 in Southern Tagalog regional newspapers. RA 9264 provides, among others that, the city shall comprise the present jurisdiction of the town of Santa Rosa. ***Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

4 hurt in Marikina fire

FOUR people were hurt, including a firefighter, in a fire that razed at least 80 shanties in a resettlement area in Marikina City yesterday. This is the biggest fire to hit Marikina this year. City officials are already appealing to other residents to donate old clothes, shoes and unused kitchen utensils for the affected families. Senior Insp. Antonio Razal, the city's fire chief, said around 400 people have been rendered homeless in the two-hour blaze. Houses made of light materials, such as the shanties at the Phase 1, Balubad Resettlement Site in Barangay Nangka, are highly combustible. Many of the families affected have been relocated to Camacho, also in Barangay Nangka, according to the fire chief. ***Luige del Puerto***

Rape suspect acquitted

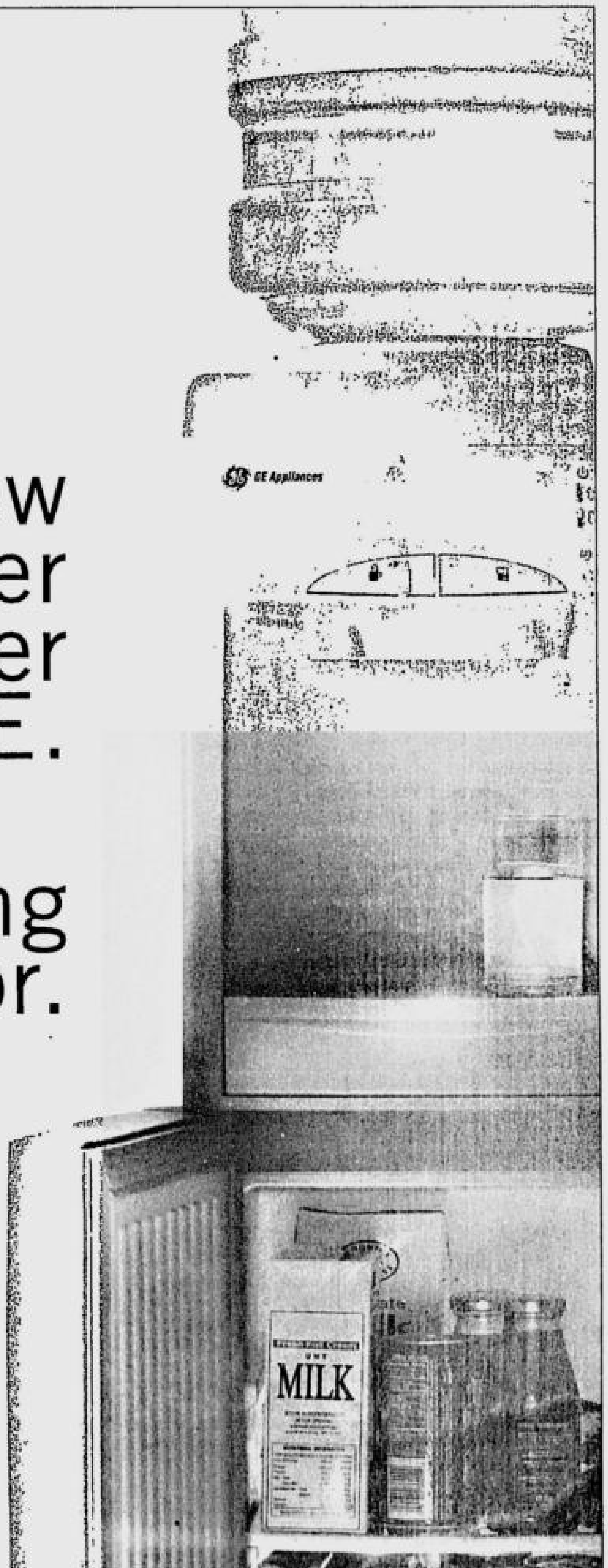
A TRICYCLE driver who was accused of raping a University of the Philippines student three years ago was acquitted yesterday by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court. In a 24-page decision, QC RTC Branch 219 Pairing Judge Jose Paneda exonerated Leo Cabuelo, of Old Balara, Diliman, Quezon City, from the rape charges. Paneda explained that "mere suspicion is not enough to take away one's liberty and destroy one's reputation. Guilt must be proven by proof as clear as daylight, by evidence so airtight that no room is left for any reasonable doubt." The complainant, a resident of Pansol, Balara, claimed she was raped by the accused on the night of Feb. 25, 2001. Cabuelo urged her to board his tricycle saying he also resides in the same barangay, the complainant alleged. But the accused allegedly went to a different direction and tried to drag her inside an abandoned building. But the alleged victim resisted and shouted for help. ***Tina Santos***

Water service cutoff

PARTS of Manila and Quezon City will have no water for 23 hours starting at 11 p.m., Tuesday, April 6, until 10 p.m. of the following day. Maynilad Water said the water service interruption will pave the way for the replacement of 2-units defective butterfly valve inside Algeciras Pumping Station in Sampaloc, Manila. The affected areas are Sta. Cruz area bounded by Estero San Lazaro, New Antipolo, Andalucia and C.M. Recto; West Sampaloc bounded by Andalucia, España, Blumentritt and Dimasalang; along Fajardo, S.H. Loyola and Earnshaw Street; Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital; San Lazaro Hospital; and UST Compound. In Quezon City, the areas affected are Barangays Sta. Teresita, Don Manuel, and Doña Josefa.

Security for malls

POLICE OFFICIALS met with top business leaders from Pasig City, Mandaluyong City and San Juan on Thursday night to draft measures in ensuring that business centers in Eastern Metro Manila remains secure and safe. "We want more cooperation from them in the area of security," said Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela, head of the Eastern Police District. Valenzuela said they are attempting to create an advisory body which could suggest security measures to the police. About 20 business leaders, most of them from the Ortigas Center, Greenhills Shopping Complex, and StarMall and Shangri-La in Mandaluyong, came to the meeting where police briefed the businessmen on anti-terrorism measures and the current security situation in Metro Manila. ***Luige del Puerto***



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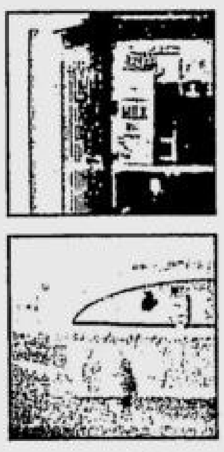

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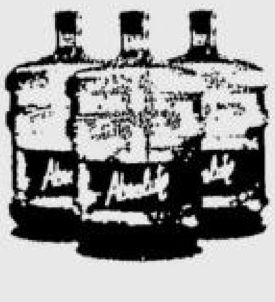

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a) Buy 1 GE water dispenser.
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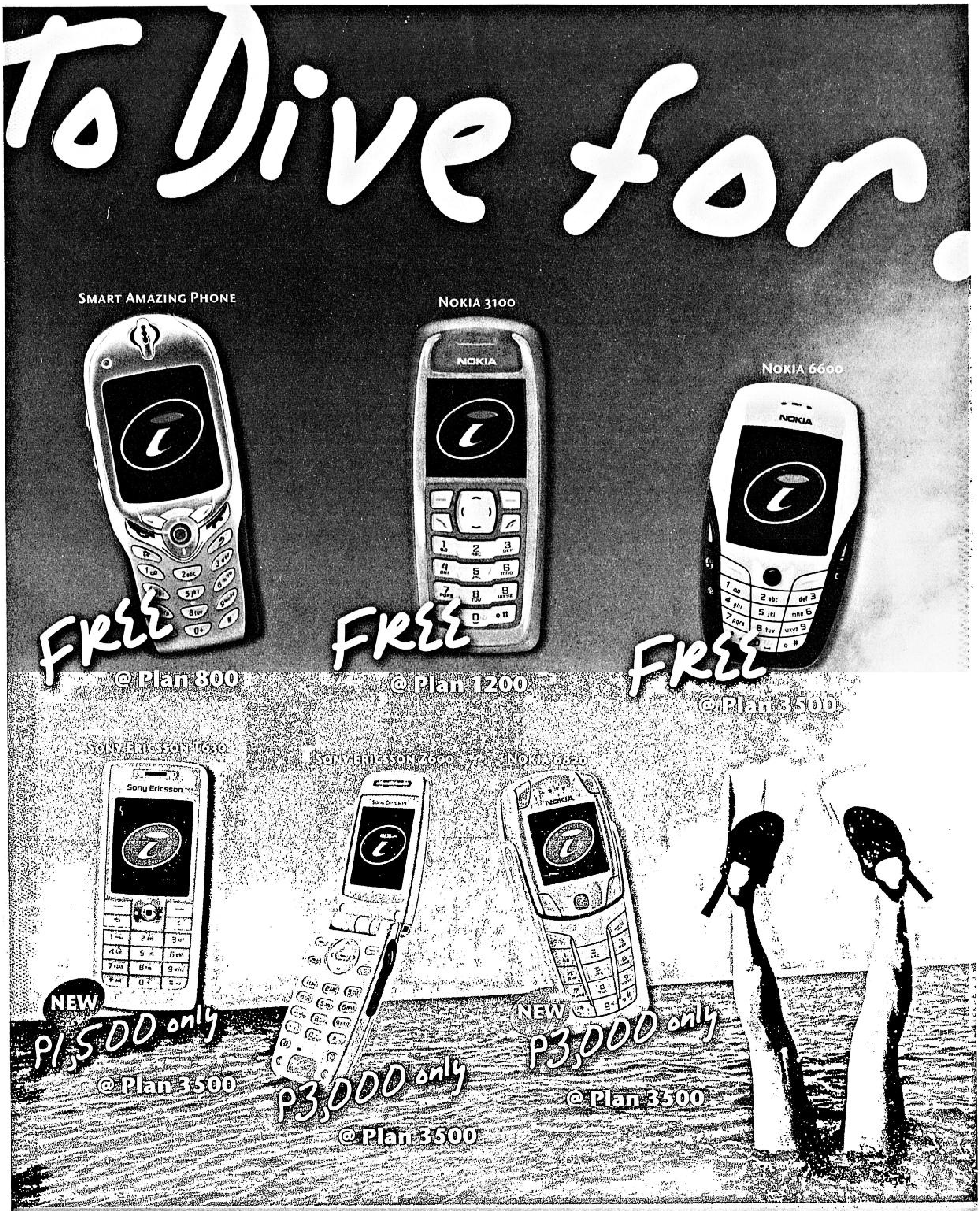
c) Upon signing of the agreement form, customer gets the free 18.95 liter (5 gallons) Absolute drinking water (bottles not included).
d) Customer is also entitled to a minimum of TWO free 18.95 liter (5 gallons) bottles on the 6th and the 12th month (note: the no. of free bottles is equivalent to the customer's average consumption of the previous months.)

Available in GMA only until April 30, 2004. See leaflets for more details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3213, Series of 2004


to Dive for.
SMART AMAZING PHONE
FREE
@ Plan 800
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BASKETBALL: NBA - Heat vs Pistons; 9 a.m. (r- 8 p.m.); Solar Sports; Rockets vs Nuggets; 10 a.m. (r-9 30 p.m.); ESPN - Miami tries to stay inside the magic eight against Detroit while Houston and Denver collide in this crucial encounter with playoff implications.
GOLF. The Masters Official Film 2003; 9.30 p.m.; Star Sports - Rewind and take another look at last year's tournament at Augusta.
Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

FedEx lures Lipa as new mentor

By June Navarro

CONVINCED that he would be keeping his job in the national team, Joe Lipa yesterday agreed to coach the FedEx Express in the Philippine Basketball Association.

Lipa had initially turned down the offer to replace Boni Garcia as head coach but changed his mind after he was assured that he will remain coach of the 20-and-under Philippine team.

"When we reminded him that it was like shooting two birds with one stone, he finally acceded to our plea," said FedEx team manager Lito Alvarez, stressing that team owner Bert Lina is also solidly behind the RP team.

FEDEX/ A26

LIPA: Like shooting two birds with one stone

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WARREN Ybañez of Viva Mineral Water slips away from Jam Alfad of Blu Star for a drive in Thursday night's PBL Unity Cup game won by the Water Force, 83-76. See story on A26. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Shell goes for third win vs SLR

SHELL tries to stretch its winning streak to three when it tackles faltering Sta. Lucia Realty today in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Philsports Arena.

STANDINGS	W	L
San Miguel	8	0
Alaska	5	3
Talk N Text	5	3
Red Bull	4	2
Coca-Cola	4	3
Purefoods	3	5
Shell	3	5
Ginebra	3	5
FedEx	2	5
Sta. Lucia	1	7

GAMES TODAY
(Philsports Arena)
4:10 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Shell
6:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs Coca-Cola

The Turbochargers are on a two-game roll after the departure of American coach John Moran, beating Coca-Cola and crowd-drawer Barangay Ginebra, respectively, to tie the Gin Kings at 3-5.

"We haven't won back-to-back games for a very long time. Winning a third straight will fire up the team even more and boost our standings," said Shell governor Bobby Kanapi.

The Shell-SLR clash is set at 4:10 p.m. followed by the Red Bull-Coca Cola encounter at 6:30.

Newly installed Shell coach Leo Austria will have to do what the FedEx did to the Realtors the other night when the Express cut their towering foes down to size by employing gang-rebounding and a stingy defense.

"Our focus will be on their import. I guess if we limit (Derrick) Brown's point production, we have a good chance of beating them," said Austria, who found a cure to the Turbochargers' series of end-game collapse in the past.

Under Moran, the Turbochargers would start out strong only to lose steam in the end. Shell lost what looked like a couple of won games due to its sputtering finishes.

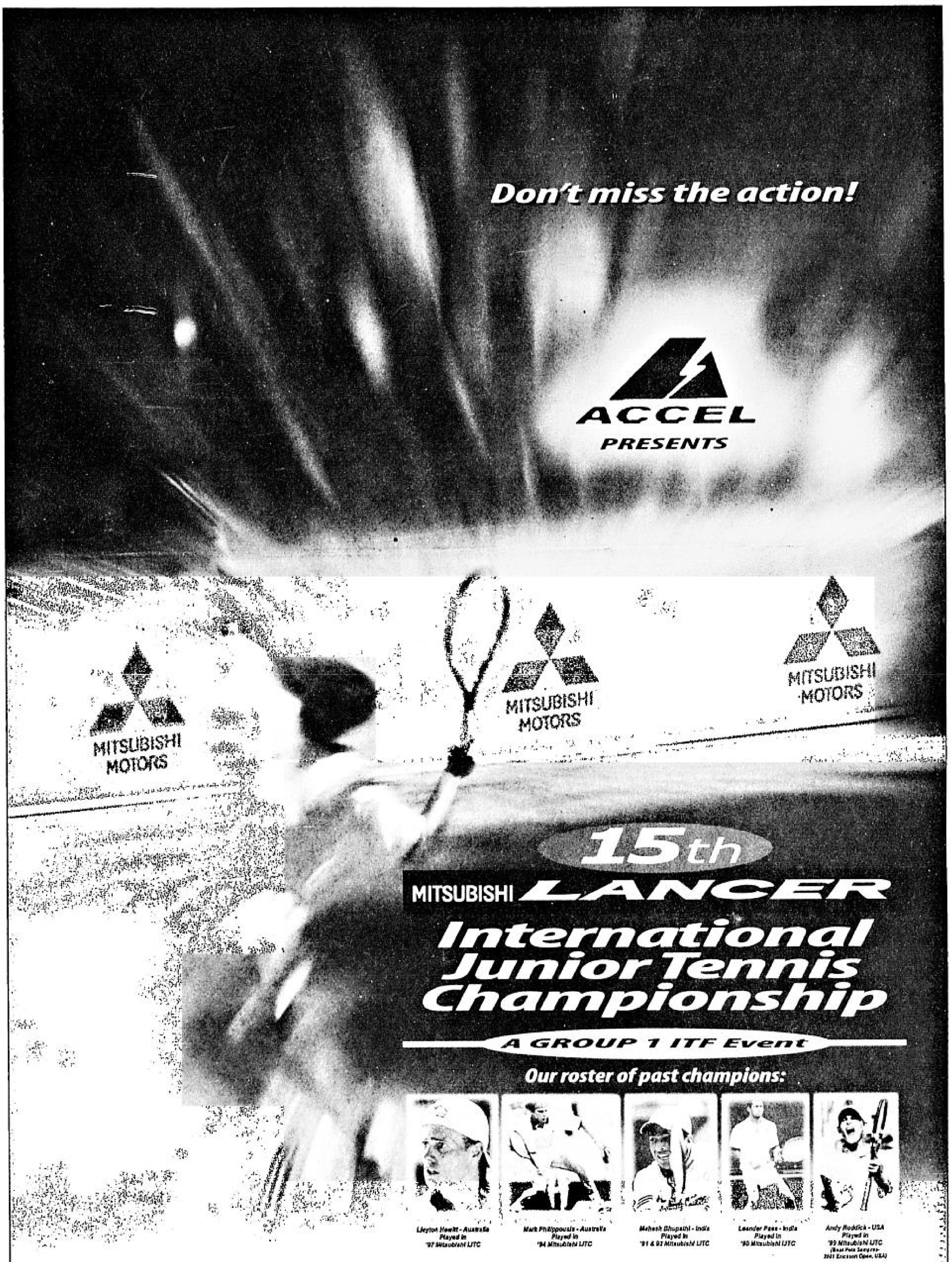
Austria will again turn to Ronald Tubid, Tony Dela Cruz, Mike Hrabak, Rich Alvarez, Rensy Bajar, Chris Jackson and Edwin Bacani to provide support for import Marek Ondera.

Chris Calaguio, who hurt his right ankle against the Gin Kings, is a doubtful starter.

Although reinforced by the league's scoring leader in Brown, the Realtors (1-7) couldn't find the right chemistry to bolt out of a slump.

"Our interior defense and the ability to contain Red Bull's big men will be tested. We must double in the shaded area, scramble for the ball and keep on running to survive Red Bull," said Coca-Cola coach Chot Reyes.

Coach Yeng Guiao is not totally sold on 6-foot-8 import DeAngelo Collins. He wants to replace Collins with Julius Nwosu as soon as he finishes his stint in Lebanon. *June Navarro*



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WBC boots Pacquiao out of Top 10 ratings

By Salven L. Lagumbay

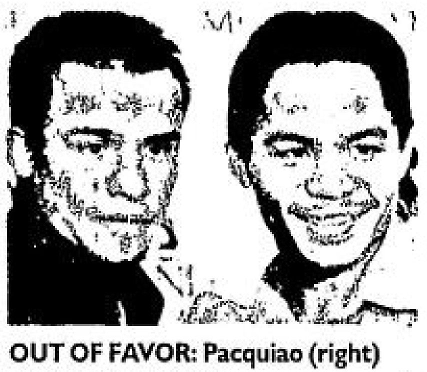
WITH his mammoth clash against WBA/IBF featherweight champ Juan Manuel Marquez drawing near, consensus featherweight king Manny Pacquiao found himself getting the boot as the Mexico-based World Boxing Council (WBC) took him out of Top 10 in its latest rankings for March.

Curiously, the same world body had previously installed Pacquiao No. 3 contender, behind No. 1 Chi In-jin and No. 2 Michael Brodie, who will contest the crown vacated by Erik Morales. The first Chi-Brodie fight ended in a controversial draw last December in England.

But here's a consolation: WBC president Jose Sulaiman had already installed Pacquiao mandatory challenger to the winner of the Chi-Brodie fight on April 10 in Manchester, England.

Pacquiao will take on WBA/IBF champ Marquez in a 12-round showdown at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino on May 8.

But while Pacquiao crashed out of the WBC Top 10 rankings, OPBF superbantam champion Jimrex Jaca made a big leap and moved up as fifth contender to the world crown held by Mexican Oscar Larios, who had openly expressed interest in challenging Pacquiao. Jaca occupied the No. 7 slot last month.



OUT OF FAVOR: Pacquiao (right) with rival Marquez AP

PBL CAGING

Hapee, Sunkist seek tie for lead

STANDINGS	W	L
Viva	2	0
Welcoat	2	0
Sunkist	1	0
Hapee	1	0
Lee Pipes	0	1
Montana	0	1
Blustar	0	2
Toyota Otis	0	2

GAMES TODAY ***(Makati Coliseum)***
2 p.m.—Lee Pipes vs Hapee
4 p.m.—Montaña vs Sunkist

THE TARGET is to climb the upper half of the leaderdoard when Hapee Toothpaste and Sunkist-UST take on separate winless teams today in the PBL 2nd Unity Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Of the two, defending champion Teeth Sparklers enjoy better prospects as they face a new team in Lee Pipes-Ateneo at 2 p.m.

Despite its revamped lineup, Hapee has shown it still packs a championship kick when it defeated Montaña Pawnshop (68-61) in its first outing.

The Eagles, however, are expected to claw it all the way after acquiring the services of players who know their way around the league. Lee Pipes now has the vital cogs of Hapee's two previous conference triumphs, namely, LA Tenorio, Larry Fonacier, JC Intal and Paolo Bugia.*Marc Anthony Reyes*

FedEx . . .

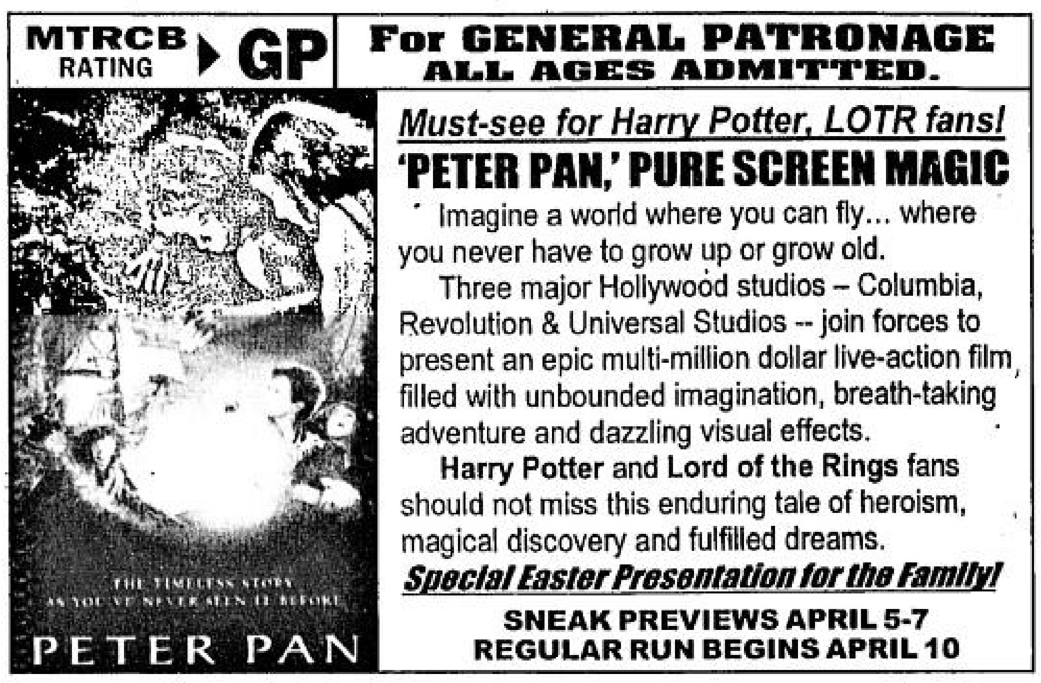
From page A25

Lina and Alvarez said the Express would request the Basketball Association of the Philippines to devise a plan and schedule wherein Lipa's job as Express mentor won't clash with his work as national team coach.

The 59-year-old Lipa is busy preparing the RP juniors for the coming South East Asia Basketball Association Young Men's Championship in Lucena City in July. The top two teams there will advance to the ABC Young Men's tournament in October.

"I made it plain to them (FedEx management) that my heart really belongs to the national team," said Lipa.

But Lipa only agreed to call the shots for the Express for the remainder of the Fiesta Conference and up to the All-Filipino Cup which will kick off the PBA's new season in October.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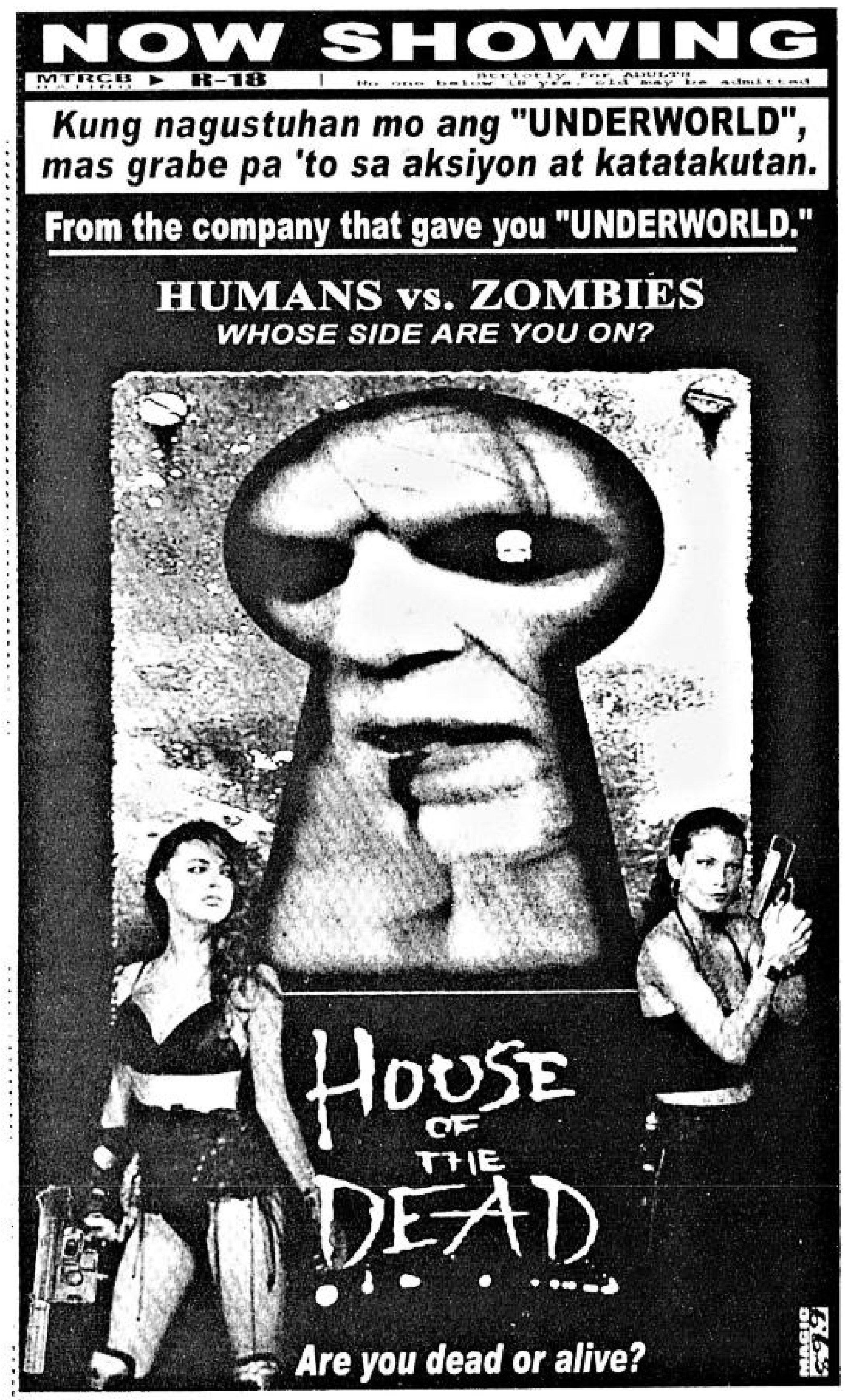
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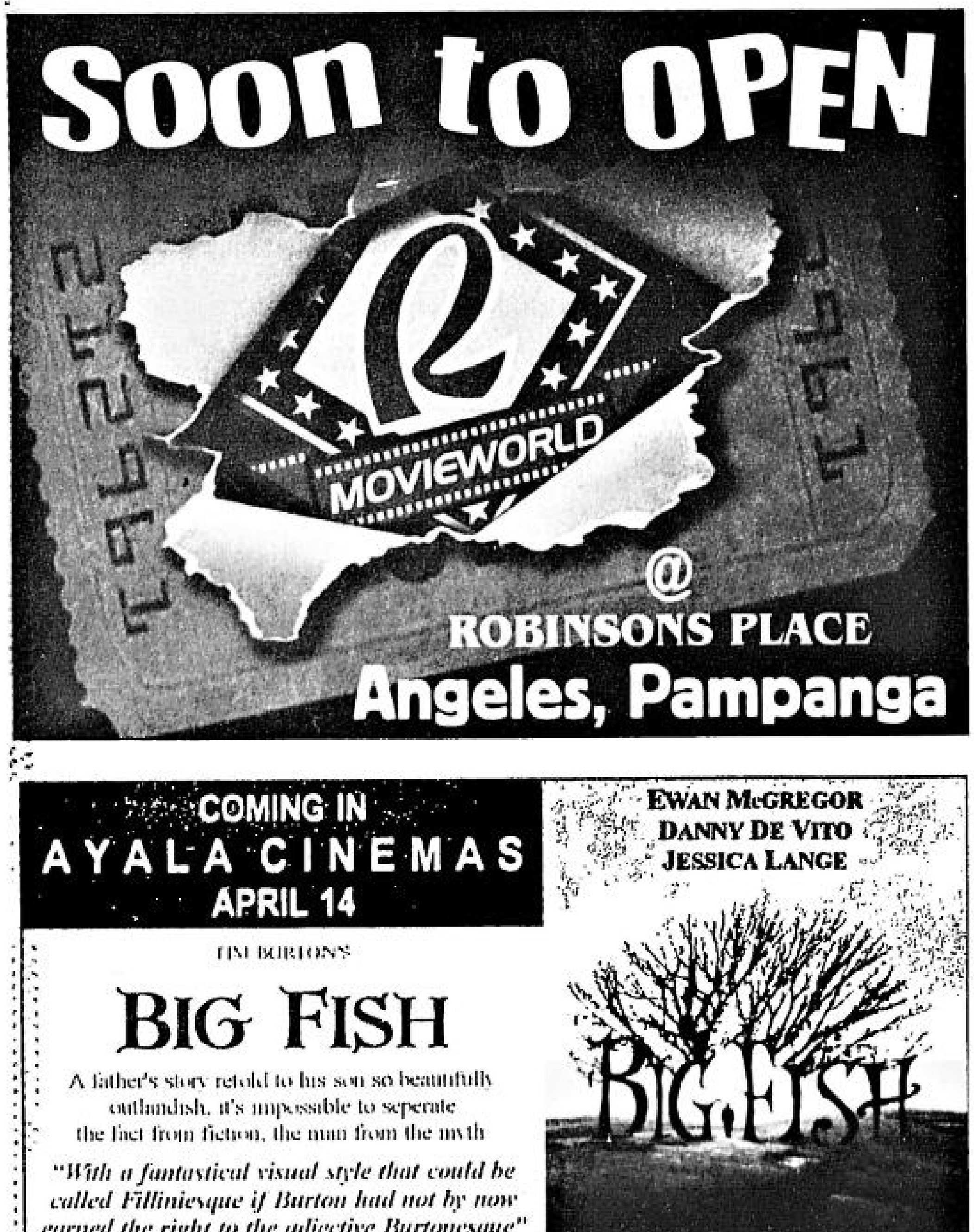
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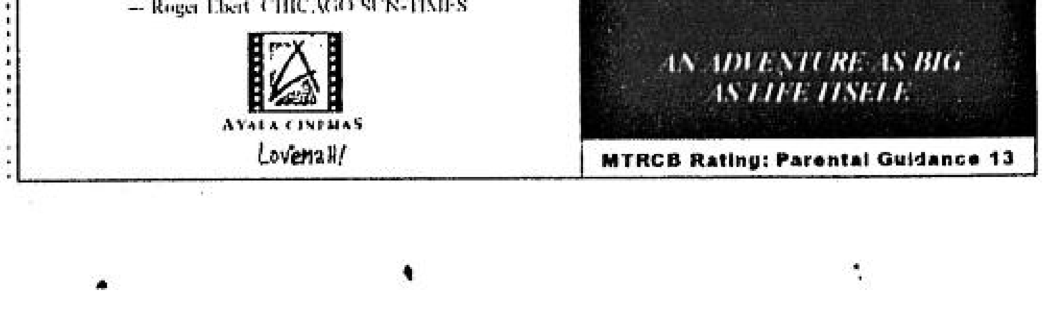
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A plea to Tommy Manotoc

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

SEVERAL people I know, among them three esteemed friends of mine from the golf world, have told me Tommy Manotoc has been telling people "a load of very flattering things" about me.

I am thrilled, of course, although I wish Tommy Manotoc would immediately stop it, if not immediately cause a stoppage to it.

From the time I became a full-fledged sports columnist in 1981 in the Bulletin, up to that eventful day in August 1986 when I moved this column to the INQUIRER, it had been my motto to maintain a low-key approach to everything.

I write what I want to write, guided mainly by the No. 1 element of journalism: Obligation to the truth.

I write with the belief that not everybody will believe me.

I write knowing fully well that every column that I finish could well be my last column on earth. All my soul, the blood from my heart, could be seen dripping from it.

If and when somebody got hurt while I am trying to drive home a point, or merely wanting to comment on something I believe is worth commenting about, I am sorry. Journalism is a cruel job in that it tends to collect more enemies than friends.

For all I know, I have not made life difficult for Tommy Manotoc during the last 30 years that I've been a sportswriter (there, now you have an idea how old I am). Far as I know, I have written several very savory pieces about him, specifically when he gave Crispa its second Grand Slam title in the PBA in 1983 and also when he scored those monumental exploits of his in golf during his heyday.

Still, that is no reason for him to go on a "flattery binge."

That's my job, Tommy. To write about news as they happen, about the truth in its naked splendor.

If, at times, I got myself in hot water because of what I had written, there were no regrets whatsoever. The name of the game here is risk. The hazards of the trade are limitless. Goes with the territory, they call it.

It's not easy being a columnist, you know, especially if that columnist loves to dwell on the unpopular. He becomes a target of, a magnet to, both the good and evil forces. He can never hide from any one of them. His shield when disaster looms is but only one: The truth.

Don't get me wrong, Tommy. But flattery is the last thing I'd wish on this earth. And, if I may give you an unsolicited advice, listen to Shakespeare: "Flattery will only get you nowhere."

To those not in the know or too young to know, Tommy Manotoc is the husband of former Miss International Au-Au Pijuan. His son by Au-Au, TJ Manotoc, is now a popular analyst of PBA games. Tommy had shacked up with Imee Marcos during the Marcos regime in a romance that had the full trappings of a soap opera. The union bore two sons but the couple now lead separate lives. Tommy has a new love but she will remain unidentified—for now.

Tommy has been in the news these days mainly because first, he was reported all set to run for president of the National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) now being headed by Rod V. Feliciano.

Tommy would soon deny that to no less than Rod, telling the NGAP president, "I was misquoted."

Next, we read about Tommy's offer to abandon his bid for the NGAP presidency in exchange for four slots of his choice as "directors of the NGAP."

In no time, Tommy would come up with another entirely new tune: He said he wasn't running anymore because, as the papers had quoted him, "The NGAP polls are flawed." This, after Mr. Feliciano had told him in another one-on-one meeting Tommy had requested with Rod: "I am not in a position to commit the four directors to you in the NGAP elections as there are basic rules to be followed regarding the NGAP polls. Only the members will have the final say on who will sit as directors in the NGAP."

As everybody knows, the NGAP membership will elect 13 directors on April 26. The 13 will next elect the president and other officers who will serve for the next two years.

I still can't figure it out: Why would Tommy Manotoc utter "flattering things" about me when I am not even running for any position in the NGAP? As Yul Bryner in the King & I loves to say, "Is a puzzlement!"

Anyway, Tommy, please call me to clear the air?

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The 15th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship

SIDELIGHTS:

The annual Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship has truly emerged as one of the few international tournaments which are deemed as the breeding ground of future world champions and top campaigners in the Association of Tennis professionals (ATP) and the Women's Tennis Association (WTA).

The tournament, now on its 15th year, was elevated to a Group 1 tournament by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) last year, a testimony to its attracting power which drew past champions and now top campaigners like American Andy Roddick, Australians Lleyton Hewitt and Mark Philippoussis and Indians Mahesh Bhupati and Leander Paes.

The tournament started as a draw 32 Group 3 championship 15 years ago. This time, even with all the travel advisories not favoring going to the Philippines coupled with the hot election issues pervading, the tournament drew 18 boys and 13 girls ranked in the top 100 of the ITF with the top 16 seeds in the boys' division ranked no lower than No. 70 and the top eight in the distaff side not lower than No. 73. And this year, campaigners from 25 nations all over the world are represented in the tourney.

* * * *

The 15th edition of the Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship was formally opened yesterday by no less than Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain and Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. (MMPC) President and CEO Kengo Takase. The two gentlemen, while delivering short remarks, hit the ceremonial serves.

Giving the tournament the prestige it deserves with his appearance, Buhain, a former star athlete himself, exhorted the participants whom he notes has been growing in number through the years.

The event is just a 48-man draw tournament but the list of applicants reached more than 200, necessitating a two-day qualifying to accommodate six qualifiers. Buhain also said that he has been following the tournament for the past few years and he is sure that many of the participants will eventually be in the ATP and WTA lists of top campaigners in the near future. Takase, for his part, reiterated the MMPC vow of helping the nation in developing the sport of tennis and his company's commitment in supporting the annual event.

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Asian triathlon on; Olympic slots at stake

By Trina Ibarle

SUBIC—Defending champion Daniel Sapunov of Kazakhstan faces tough competition from other world-ranked triathletes in the Speedo 2004 Asian Triathlon Championship which unfurls today at the Subic Bay Freeport.

Sapunov, who topped last year's edition in Chennai, India, will be challenged by compatriot and world-ranked No. 10 Dmitry Gaag, Japan's Hiroyuki Nishiuchi and Junichi Yamamoto, and last year's second placer Daniel Lee Chiwo of Hong Kong.

Some 350 athletes from 19 countries are vying in the 1.5K swim-40K bike-10K run distance.

The top finishers in the men's and women's Elite Open category will clinch slots to the Athens Olympics in August.

The women's event is expected to be dominated again by Japan, which sent 60 entries led by champion Shizoka Kutsuna.

Meanwhile, top local bets George Vilog and Noel Salvador vow to go for respectable finishes in the event organized by the Triathlon Association of the Philippines in cooperation with the Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

Vilog won the recent National Triathlon over Salvador. Other RP entries are Eldy Banluta of Cebu, Earl Rustia and John Mark Yamoyam.

Ani Karina de Leon, Sandra Araullo and Mylene Jarina will see action in the highly competitive women's event.

De Leon, who underwent a rigorous training in New Zealand, is gunning for a decent placing in the women's Elite Open while national champion Araullo is aiming for recognition in the Under-23.

Josephine Pilapil, winner of both the Asian Aquathlon and the junior crown in the national championships, will lead Mimi Lucas, Elsie Langit, and Astrud Valdez in the girls' junior competition.

SMC All-Stars join PBA road games

THE TOURING San Miguel All-Stars team of former pros show its wares some more in curtain-raiser games during the PBA's provincial sorties, as it enters its second year spreading goodwill and cheers to basketball fans across the country.

The All-Stars, launched last year in support of San Miguel Corporation's growth strategy, has already played in Dumaguete City and Cebu City last March 18 and 26, respectively, and in Tacloban City only last Thursday.

The touring team will also share stellar billing with the PBA squads in out-of-town sorties to Zamboanga City on April 16, Puerto Princesa on April 23, Davao City on April 30 and Lucena City on May 6, said team manager Manny Liwag.

The All-Stars has visited some 50 destinations. Spearheading the team are Eric Altamirano, project director, and his deputies, Cris Calilan and Ritchie Ticzon. The All-Stars also conduct basketball clinics for children under a program called Skills Builder Camp.

PAF quintet stuns Taal Cooking Oil

COLONEL Roselito Nolasco's Air Force cagers shocked erstwhile unbeaten Taal Cooking Oil, 104-102, in the NDBL (National Basketball Development League) tournament recently at the UM gym.

The Airmen overcame an eight-point halftime deficit to deal the Oil Masters their first loss in four games.

PAF's victory enabled Alex Wang's Ball Club to match Taal's league-leading record.

Navy crushed Indos Strip, 102-73, in the other game.

Wang's Ball Club and Indos Strip both won by forfeiture over MICTS Transport in separate scheduled games.

QC village cage meet under way

THE LARGEST inter-village basketball tournament kicks off its ninth season today at the Tivoli Royal Country Club Gym.

Seventy-five teams representing 30 villages from the Alliance of Quezon City Homeowners Associations Inc. will join the motorcade around the city, said AQCHAI commissioner Lemuel Ortiz.

The tournament is sponsored by Moby Hotdogs, Purefoods Hormel, Manila Bank Royale Palace-Don Antonio, Stik-O, Nissan-Commonwealth, Filipinas Palm Oil, Insular Assurance Life Company, Homeworks and Molten Basketball, the official ball.

The event is part of the association's annual Sagip Kabataan at Kapaligiran Project.

Mild 7 F1 club party

THE MILD Seven F1 Club moves into its new home at Teak Bar & Bistro at the Powerplant Mall, Rockwell, Makati with a kickoff viewing party of the Bahrain Grand Prix (GP) on April 4 at 6:30 p.m.

This GP, the third race of the 2004 F1 season, will be held in the brand-new Sakhir circuit located on a 1.7-square-kilometer site which was formerly an oasis and a camel farm in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This is the very first time that an F1 race will be run in the Middle East.

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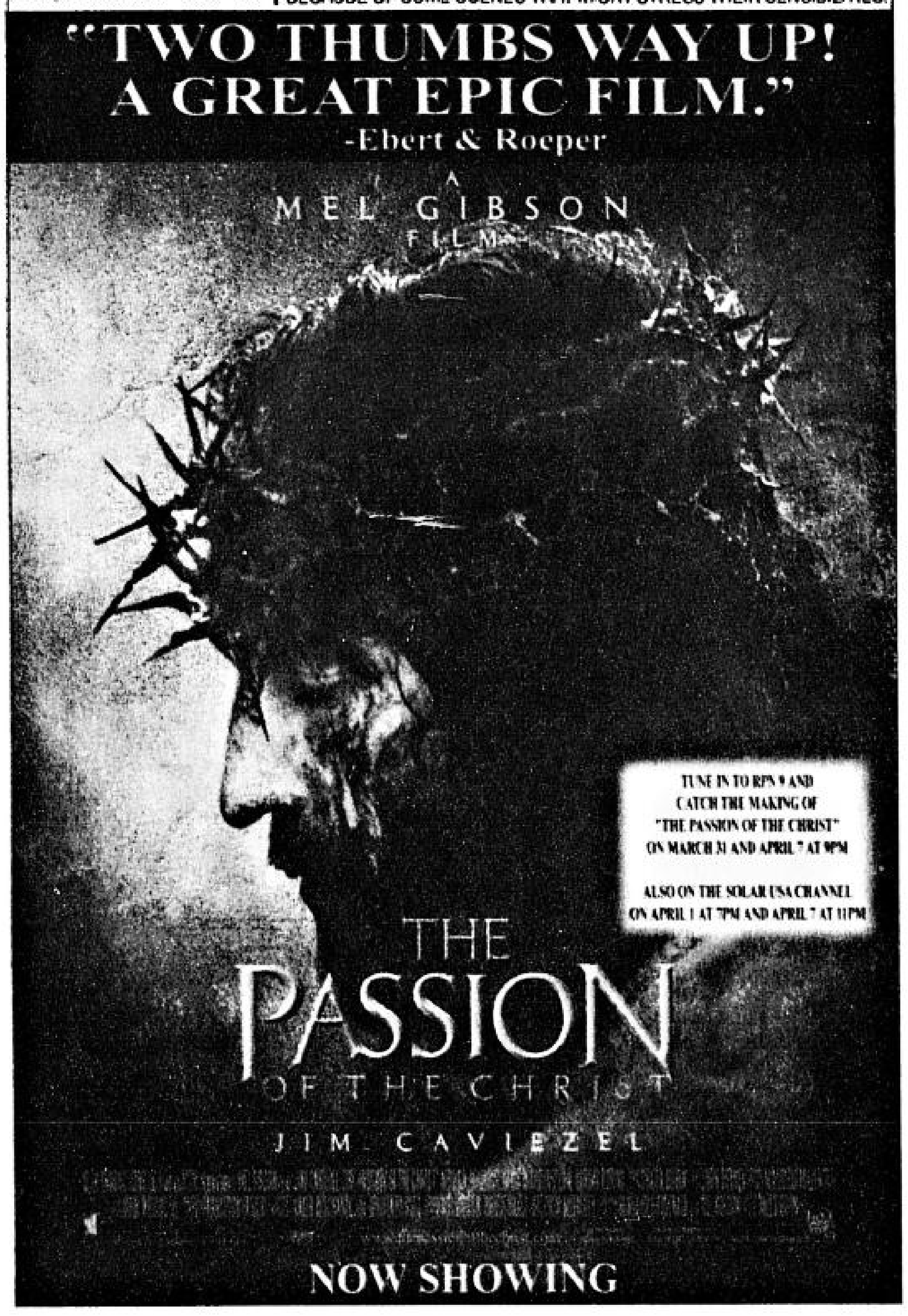

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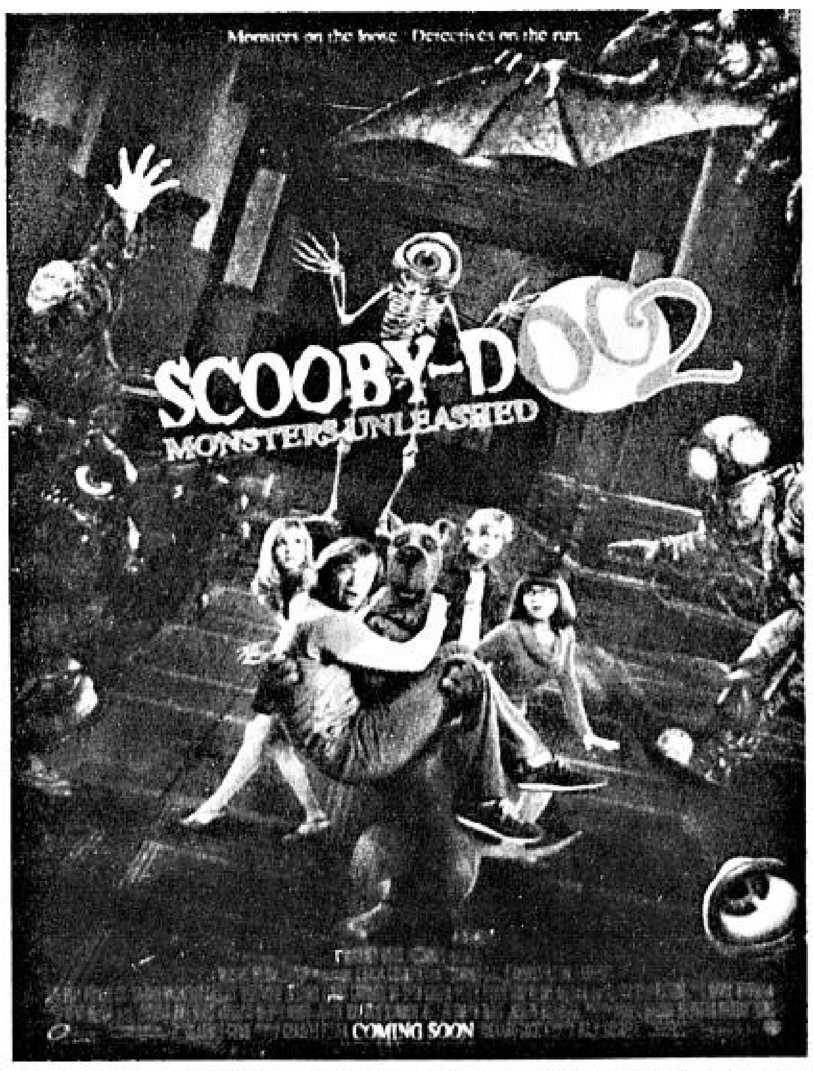

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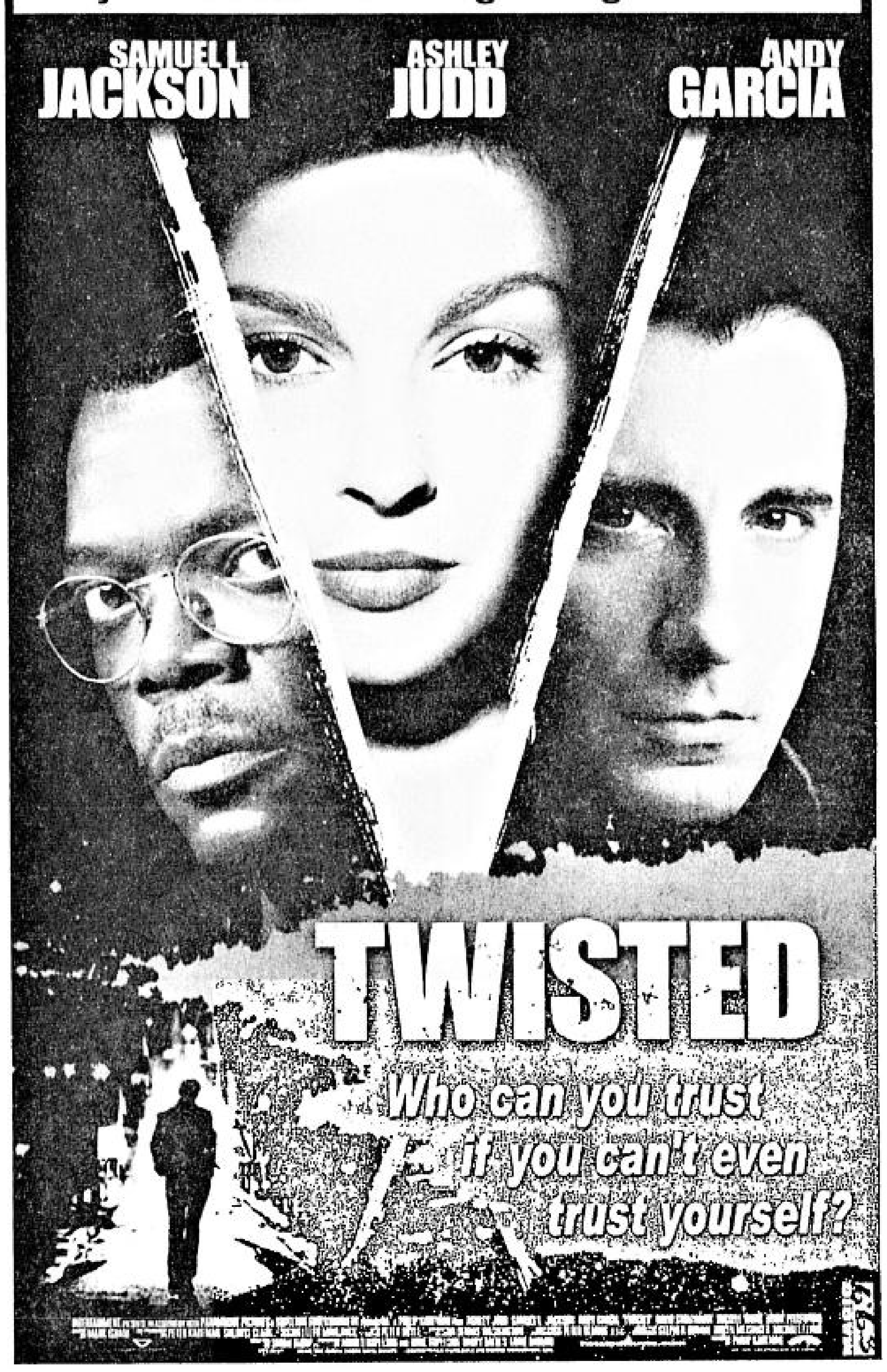

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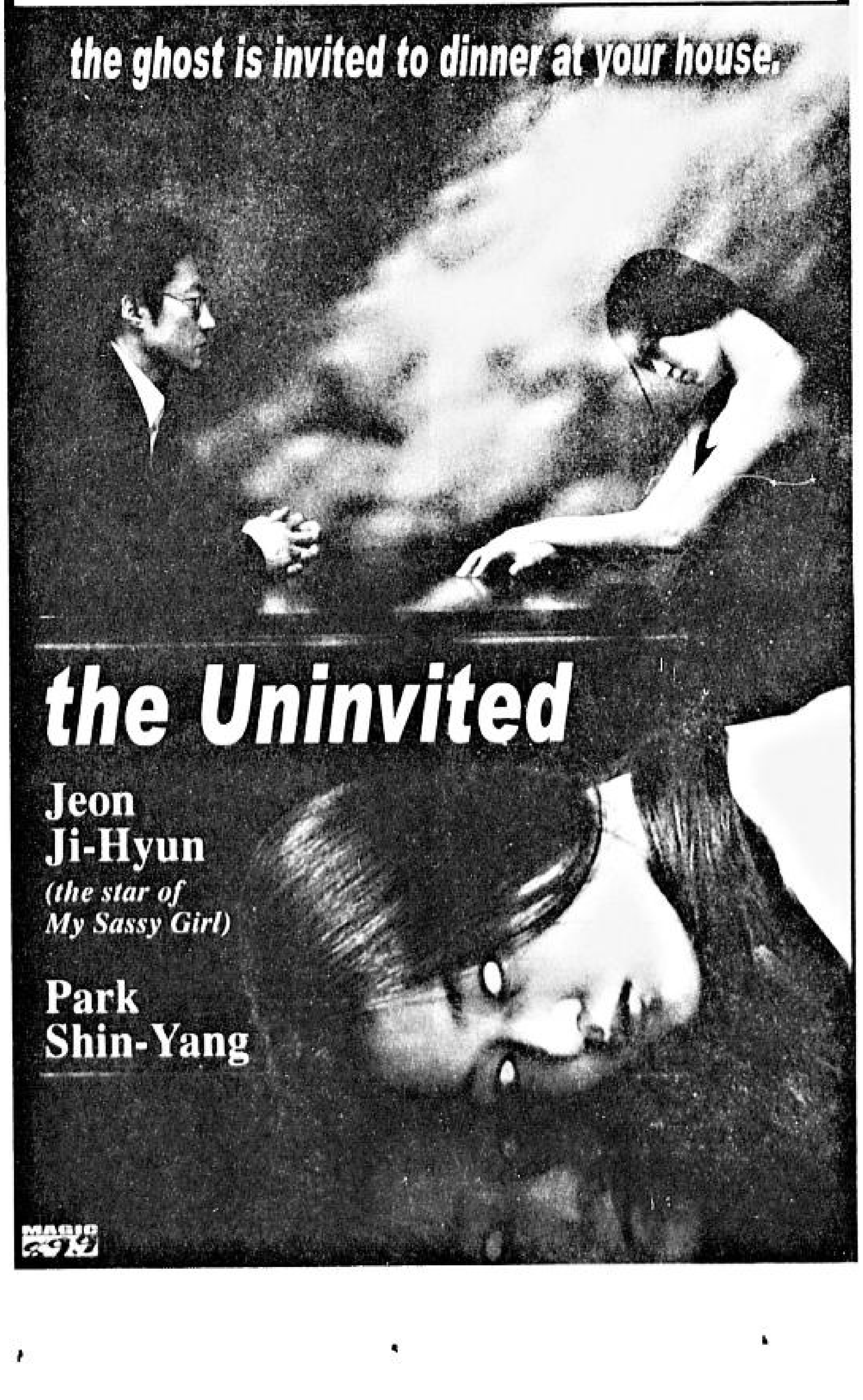


Briton thrives in heat, gains Lancer semis

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TOM Rushby swears he's starting to like the Philippines' summer heat.

This was evident in the way the 17-year-old British ninth seed disposed of Australian No. 8 Lachlan Ferguson, 6-3, 6-1, yesterday to barge into the semifinals in boys singles of the Mitsubishi Lancer International junior tennis championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Rushby, conqueror of top seed Karan Rastogi of India in the third round, was hardly bothered by the scorching sun as he overpowered Ferguson.

"In fact, I'm enjoying it," said Rushby of the weather which he said was a welcome change from the conditions back home in Derby, England. "I hit the ball pretty well and my service game worked."

He will next take on fourth seed William Ward of New Zealand, who warded off the challenge of Dutch fifth seed Coen Van Kuelen, 6-4, 6-4, in this tourney sponsored by Wilson Balls and Accel Sports.

India's Tushar Liberham, seeded seventh, pulled off a 6-4, 6-2 triumph over third seed Joel Kerley of Australia to forge a semis duel with Britain's Jamie Murray.

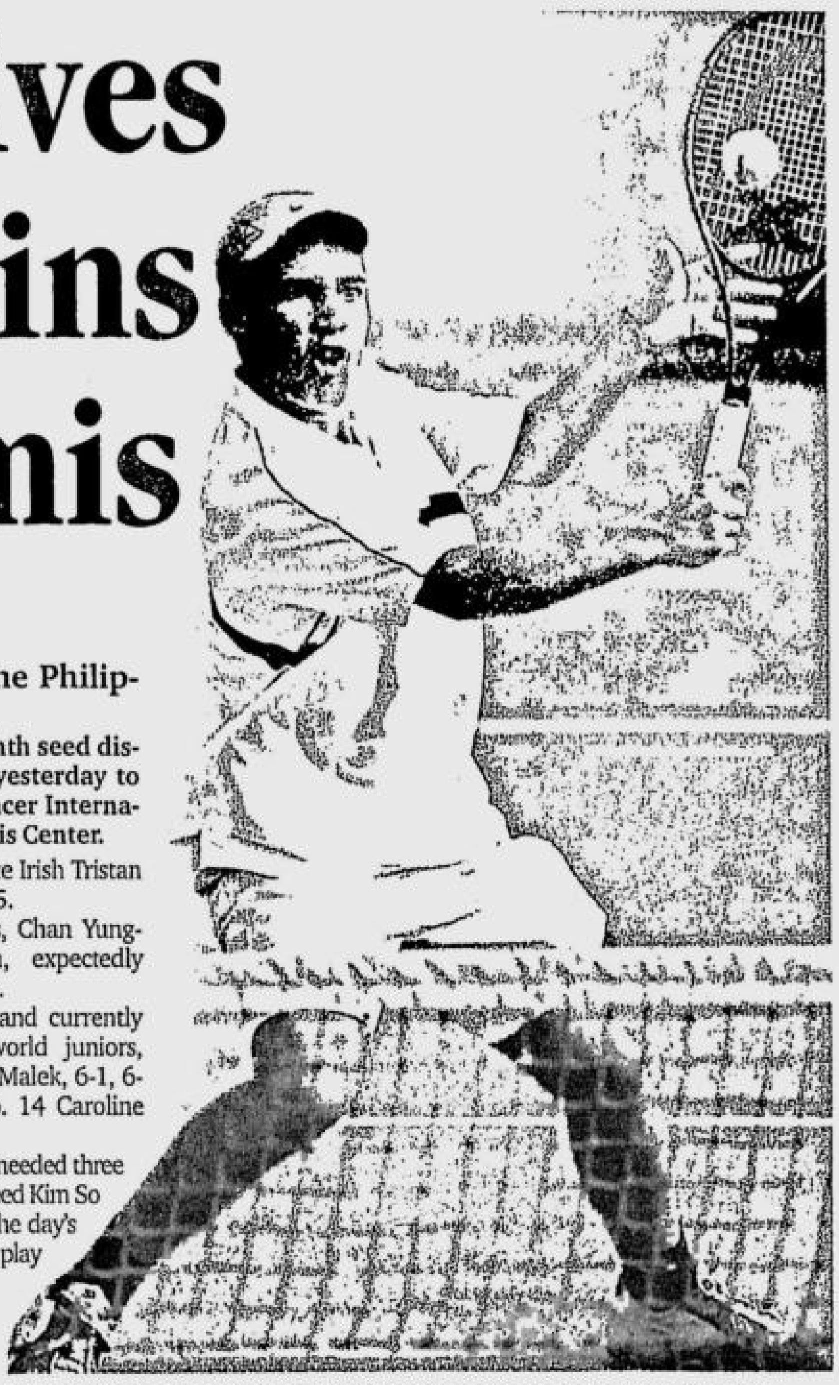
The 11th seed Murray recovered from a shaky first set to eliminate Irish Tristan Farron Mahon, 2-6, 6-2, 7-5.

Taiwan's top two seeds, Chan Yung-jan and Hsu Weh-hsin, expectedly moved into the next round.

Chan, the No. 1 seed and currently ranked No. 7 in the world juniors, whipped German Tatjana Malek, 6-1, 6-1, to advance against No. 14 Caroline Wozniacki.

Hsu, the world's No. 21, needed three sets to oust Korean eighth seed Kim So Jung, 6-4, 6-7 (6), 7-5, in the day's only tight match. Hsu will play Septi Mende of Indonesia.

Wozniacki hurdled Bianca Bonifate of Romania, 6-4, 6-1, while Mende beat Michaela Johansson, 7-6 (2), 6-2.



MURRAY De Rijke volleys against Navdeep Singh and Tushar Liberhan in his winning doubles partnership with Abdukhali Ocvirk. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Finley, Nash star as Mavs rip Kings

DALLAS—Michael Finley scored 29 points and Steve Nash had a career-high 19 assists Thursday as the Dallas Mavericks beat the Western Conference-leading—and suddenly struggling—Sacramento Kings, 127-117.

The Kings lost for the fourth time in five games, and fell into a tie with the Los Angeles Lakers, who defeated Houston, for the top seed in the West.

"We get more open looks, more opportunities in the open court, and it's working for us," Finley said.

Finley made seven straight field goals in one stretch. The first four came in a 10-0 run at the end of the first half that pushed the Mavericks ahead, 67-50.

Nash had 20 points to go along with his 19 assists, the most in the NBA this season and a franchise record for a regulation game. Jason Kidd had 25 assists in a double-overtime game in 1996.

Dirk Nowitzki followed a 35-point, 18-rebound effort Tuesday against Cleveland with 27 points and 10 rebounds. Marquis Daniels and Antawn Jamison had 16 points each.

Mike Bibby led six Kings in double figures with 23 points. Chris Webber had 22 points and Peja Stojakovic 21.

"We've won 52 games. We've got to find out how we did that," Kings coach Rick Adelman said. "We have to find ourselves again."

In other NBA games, the Trail Blazers beat the Sixers, 88-82, and new West leaders Lakers outgunned the Rockets, 93-85. *AP*

RP jins ready for gold quest in Athens

MEMBERS of the RP taekwondo team yesterday said it should not come as a complete surprise if the country's 80-year-old search for an Olympic gold medal ends in Athens this year.

Two taekwondo jins—Donald Geisler and Mary Antoinette Rivero—who earned the trip to the Greece capital in separate qualifying tournaments, said they would be up to the monumental challenge in this year's Olympiad.

The duo, who guested in yesterday's SCOOP sa Kamayan weekly forum sponsored by the Triple V Group of Companies and Photokina Marketing, said the national squad, which also includes Tshomlee Go, has been extensively preparing since last year with the hope of winning for the country its first Olympic gold medal.

Rivero, at 16 the youngest of the three Filipino Olympians, said the chance of becoming the youngest to bag a gold medal in taekwondo would inspire her no end in going for the win.

The three Olympians will be going to Seoul on April 20 for a three-month training to correct whatever flaws there are in their arsenal.

PIONEER BADMINTON TILT

Fierce action starts today

THERE will be sharp clashes of skills when four talent-laden teams fight for supremacy starting today in the Pioneer Badminton Summer Tournament at the Pioneer Badminton Club in Mandaluyong City.

Tournament favorites Team Epson and host Pioneer Badminton, competing in 39 categories, are expected to crowd Team Regatta and Whistlestop in the race for overall honors.

Pioneer Badminton, second placer in two past tournaments, will again be bannered by skipper Dea Alonzo in the two-day event sponsored by Epson, PBNet, Yehey.com, Regatta, Discovery Spa, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Whistlestop and Sunrise Hotel.

Pioneer Badminton chief Edmin Tarriela said the event has enlisted over 300 badminton fanatics in Metro Manila during the tournament's leveling/qualifying schedules.

Games begin at 8 a.m. and will last until 10 p.m. today. Final-day action will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

A total of 304 participants will compete in 39 level categories, with each of the four teams enlisting the services of 78 players to complete their lineups.

Meanwhile, the Epson Summer Badminton Camp goes underway after the Lenten season, with host Pioneer Badminton Club tapping the expertise of three former national team players during the two-month exercise.

Camp director Eg Lim, Malvin Alcala and Steven Yan will share their skills and teach fundamentals to participants.

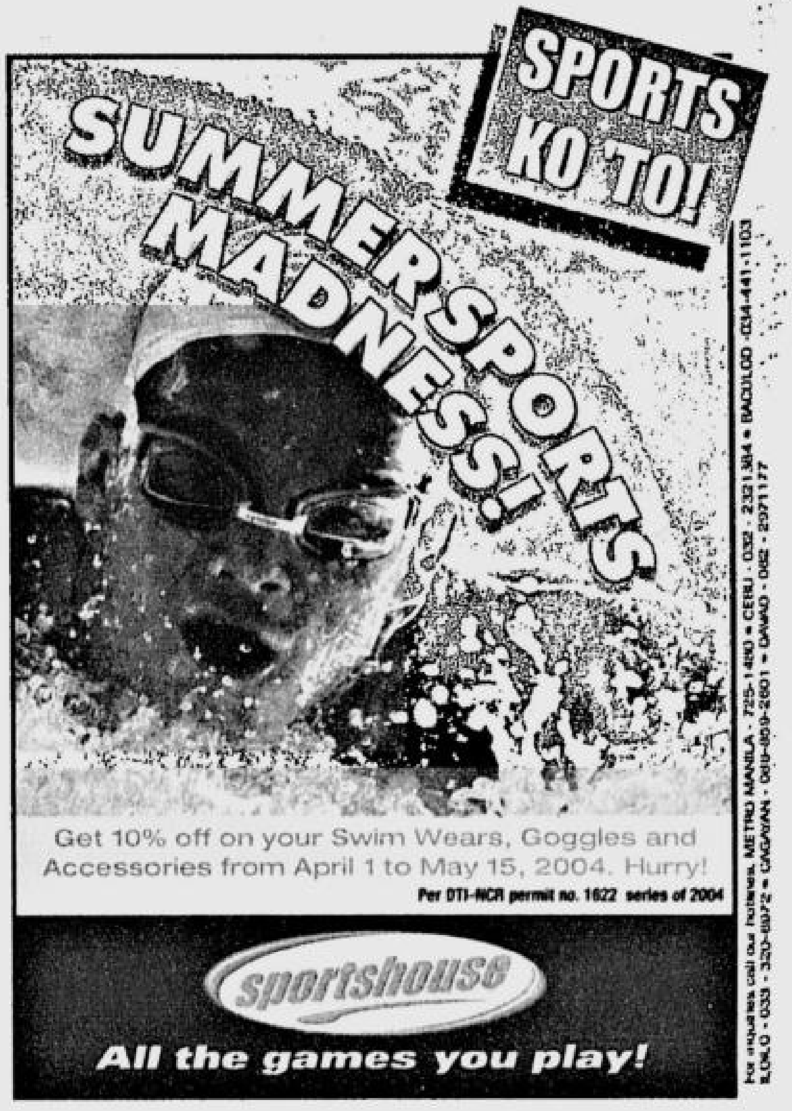
The camp, open to all enthusiasts, will be held in two batches on April 12-May 3 and May 10-31.

Participants can choose between a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule from 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. and a program that goes on Mondays, Tuesday and Thursdays from 2-3:30 p.m.

For details, call 746-0828 and 638-5343.

World Sports and Leisure Show slated

THE BIGGEST trade exposition of sports and leisure gadgets in the country, World Sports and Leisure Show, unfolds April 26-28 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. Businessmen, manufacturers, dealers, exhibition companies, trade professionals and enthusiasts from the sports and leisure industry are expected to sign up and showcase their products and services at the exhibit. "This will be a great venue for the sports and leisure buff to have a wider choice of sports and leisure equipment as well as new products and services," said Joseph Ang, founding chair of Worldbex Services International, the event organizer. Interested participants and booth exhibitors may call Teresa Morales or Carlo Polangcos of WSI at (632)5316350 or (632)5316374, or log on to www.worldbex.com or e-mail info@worldbex.com.



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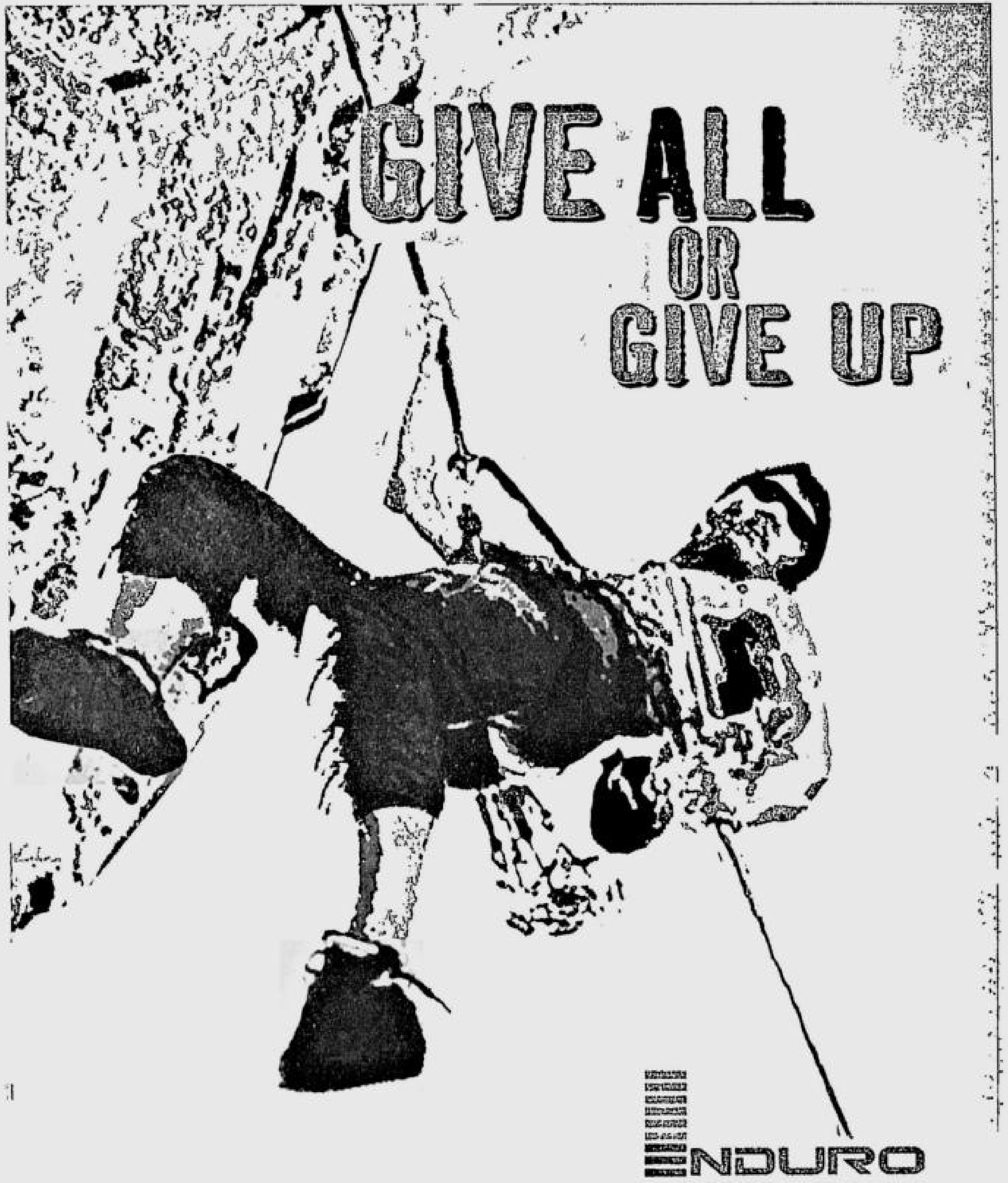

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THE PBA interactive summer sports bash concludes its weeklong activities at the SM-Marilao and SM-North Edsa this weekend with top FedEx cagers expected to grace the event. The activity centers feature touring displays such as hand and shoe prints, photo gallery, inflatable basketball hoop, PBA snap shots, Molten basketball museum and a half-court area. A PBA-Toby's booth will put on sale PBA products such as shoes, caps, jerseys, shirts, stickers, toys, puzzles plus other souvenir items at very affordable prizes. The PBA, in its effort to bring the league closer to the people, launched the event three weeks ago at the SM Megamall to give the fans, particularly the youngsters, a chance to interact with their favorite PBA players. The summer bash, organized by the PBA Properties Inc., presented by JVC and Globe Telecom and sponsored by Toby's Sports, Purefoods, Accel, Air21, Molten and Mail & More, will be held next at SM Sucat on April 12.

MM breeders vie at Roligon

TOP breeders from Metro Manila collide with their counterparts from the provinces in Roligon Mega Cockpit's "Cash Premyo 3-Cock Derby" which gets going at 1 p.m. today with 128 matches. The third edition of the Cash Premyo cockfest promoted by Abraham Bernales and company followed the first two sets of fights which lured a combined 202 entries. Aside from non-stop fights, derby enthusiasts can win giveaways from sponsor Casino Filipino-Parañaque, said Bernales. Each participant will receive P2,000 in casino chips from Casino Filipino-Parañaque, three T-shirts and product samples from Procock Capsule 200 mg. The fastest kill winner gets P12,000 plus P10,000 casino chips; the second placer P10,000 and the third placer P8,000. Last Wednesday, Negros Occidental breeder Joe Mojeno, a protege of sportsman Don Ramon Lacson, went home with the jackpot prize of P950,000 after emerging as solo champion in the "Slasher Cup Ng Masa 6-Cock Derby." For inquiries, call, 833-2275, 833-1638, 852-9774 and 952-9812 (look for Aubrey, Shirley or Tiling).

Manda derby sizzles today

MORE than 100 fights are on tap in today's 3-cock derby starting at 3 p.m. at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. A cash prize of P300,000 for an entry fee of P5,500 is at stake in the event hosted by coliseum managers Jonjon Abalos, Kags Paliza and Aba Badional. Prize bonuses include a 6 cubic-foot refrigerator for the fastest kill, 21-inch color TV for the second placer and washing machines for third and fourth finishers. Among the favorites are the entries of Richard Ticson, A. Pineda of Pateros, Ariel Adam and Manny Dayrit of Batangas, Ariel Geronga of Bulacan, Eric Daguinsin of Laguna, Ben Belen of Pasig, Rene Bondal of Makati, Rey Cabial, Cyrus Hao of Bicol, Edwin Domingo of Mandaluyong and Rey Magbuhos of Quezon. Slated on April 8 is the "Bayad Agad 2-Cock Ulutan." The first champion will get P10,000 and washing machine. For inquiries, call 532-2650 and 541-4110.

Banar against the wall in Tanduay pool

IN ORDER to stay as champ, Florencio Banar has to get back at veteran internationalist Romy del Rosario today in the continuation of the Search for the Tanduay No. 1 Billiards Player at the Robinson's Galleria.

Banar, tripped, 5-4, last week by Del Rosario, is caught in a must-win dilemma in the series sponsored by Tanduay the No. 1 Rhum, Robinson's Malls, Accel, Hope Luxury Cigarettes, and Rommel's Billiards.

The match will be aired over the National Broadcasting Network at 8-9 tonight, with the blow-by-blow delivered by Danny Romero and Recah Trinidad.

If Banar could retain the crown for eight straight weeks, he would qualify for the "Battle of Champions" later this year, together with Gaga Gabica and Johnson Vita.

He faces a tough task since Del Rosario is a former Southeast Asian Games silver medallist and a veteran of several local and international billiards tournaments.

Interested parties may inquire with the Corporate Billiards League secretariat at 0918-9219934 or may log on at the www.corporatebilliardsleague@yahoo.com.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX	
Ali 3	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 4	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 5	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
Ali 6	SCOOBY DOO 2
Ali 7	OTSO OTSO

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ARANETA COLISEUM	
APR 4	PBA: GINEBRA VS. TALK 'N' TEXT
APR 8	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)
APR 9	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)
APR 10	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (2PM)
APR 11	PBA: FED EX VS. RED BULL
APR 13	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 14	PBA: PUREFOODS VS. RED BULL
APR 15	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 16	REWIND PLUS DOBLE REVO DOUBLE PREMY O

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	KASIPING
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	KARIBAL
CINEMA-3	MAGNIFICO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HAUNTED OFFICE
CINEMA-6	GRUDGE 2
CINEMA-7	TORQUE
CINEMA-8	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OR THE CHRIST
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-12	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-14	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
CINEMA-15	50 FIRST DATES
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PIÑAS)	THE CURSE
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-4	DRAGON VS. NINJA
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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RESERVED SEATING

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

1	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 PG-13
2	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:15 PG-13
3	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 11:00 PG-13
4	SCOOBY-DOO 2	11:50, 1:55, 4:00 6:05, 8:10, 10:15 GP

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10:50, 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:50
P13

CINEMA 2 — **PASSION OF THE CHRIST**
11:20, 2:05, 4:50, 7:35, 10:30
P13

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SCOOBY DOO 2 GP 11:40, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30

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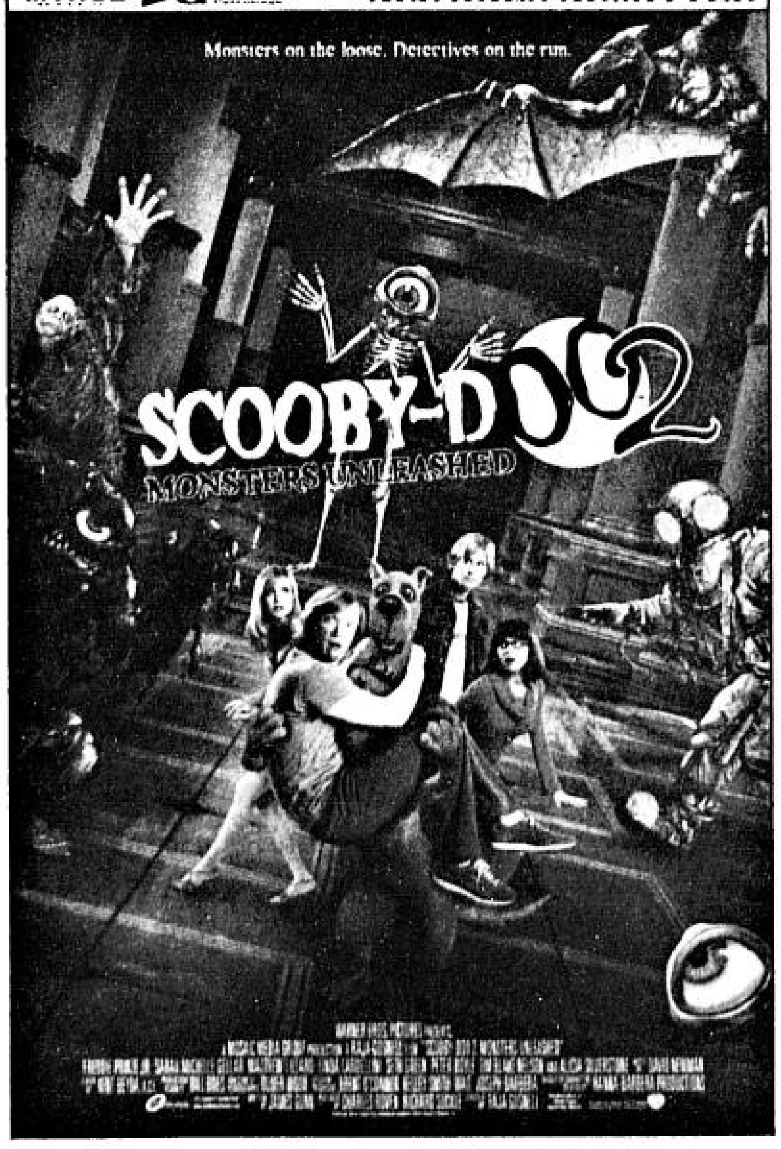
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11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30

2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 11:20, 2.00, 4.40, 7:20, 10:00	3 SCOOBY DOO 2 10.50, 1.00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:40	4 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 11.55, 2.05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:35
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10.50, 1:30, 4.10, 6.50, 9.30	6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12.30, 3.20, 6:10, 9:00	7 DON'T TEMPT ME 12:10, 2:30, 4.50, 7:10, 9:30
8 LOVE ACTUALLY 12.30, 3:00, 8.10, 10:30	9 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 10.50, 1.00, 3.10, 5:20, 7.30	10 50 FIRST DATES 11:50, 2.00, 4:10, 6:20, 10:30

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ERMITA
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1 **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST**
11:10, 1:50, 4.30, 7:10, 10:00

2 SCOOBY DOO 2 10.15, 12.10, 2.05, 4.00, 5.55, 7.50, 9.50	3 DON'T TEMPT ME 11.25, 1:35, 3:45, 5.55, 8:00, 10:00	4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 11.05, 1.10, 3.15, 5.20, 7.45, 9:40
5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10.30, 1:10, 3.50, 6:30, 9.20	6 50 FIRST DATES 10.50, 1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 7.30, 9.50	7 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:30, 1.10, 3.50, 6:30, 9:20

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1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 11:50, 2:10, 4.30, 6.50, 9.10	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:15, 1:20, 4:25, 7:30, 10:30

3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:15, 1 20, 4.25, 7.30, 10.30	4 50 FIRST DATES 10.50, 12 50, 2 50, 4 50, 6.50, 9.00	5 SCOOBY DOO 2 10 50, 12 50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10.15, 1.50, 4 55, 8 00	7 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10 15, 1 50, 4 55, 8 00	8 OTSO-OTSO 11.00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW
935-3229 / 31

1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:10, 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 10:10, 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50

3 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 12:00, 2 00, 4.00, 6 00, 8 00	4 THE GRUDGE 2 12.00, 2 00, 4 00, 6 00, 8 00	5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 11 30, 2 10, 4:50, 7:30
6 SCOOBY DOO 2 11:25, 1 15, 3 05, 4 55, 6 45, 8:35	7 50 FIRST DATES 11:25, 1:15, 3.05, 4.55, 6:45, 8:35	8 OTSO-OTSO 11:45, 1:55, 4.05, 6:15, 8:30

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2 OTSO-OTSO	2 OTSO-OTSO	2 THE CURSE
3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	3 SCOOBY DOO 2	3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 THE GRUDGE 2
		5 HIDALGO

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870	Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS 852-2125	Big R Supercenter STARMILLS San Fernando Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270
1 50 FIRST DATES	1 SCOOBY DOO 2	1 50 FIRST DATES
2 OTSO-OTSO	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
3 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT	3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 KARIBAL	4 OTSO-OTSO	4 THE NIGHTMARE
5 SCOOBY DOO 2	5 50 FIRST DATES	5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
		6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858	BACOLOD 441-0458/59	ILOILO 336-8070/78
1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1 TORQUE	1 TORQUE
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 HIDALGO	2 GOTHIKA
3 SCOOBY DOO 2	3 LOVE ACTUALLY	3 LOVE ACTUALLY
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD	4 GOTHIKA	4 THE NIGHTMARE
5 OTSO-OTSO	5 SCOOBY DOO 2	5 BONE SNATCHER
6 HIGHWAYMEN	6 OTSO-OTSO	6 SCOOBY DOO 2

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April 7, 2004 (Wednesday)

Ultimate Frisbee	Hey Jude Beachfront
Chill Out Sunsets	Club House Parao
House Party	Hey Jude

April 8, 2004 (Thursday)

Ultimate Frisbee Hat Tournament	Hey Jude Beachfront
Volleyball	Hey Jude Beachfront
Chill Out Sunsets	Club House Parao
BIGFISH Chillout Sunset Session	Waling-Waling
Carlota Drumbeaters	Boracay Terraces Resort
R&B Party by Steve Mills	Hey Jude
Sunset Sessions at the Pearl	Pearl of the Pacific
Philippine Hobie Opening Party	Diniwind Cove

April 9, 2004 (Friday)

Hobie Triangle Course Race	Race Proper
Wakeboarding Competition	Beachfront
BIGFISH Chillout Sunset Session	Waling-Waling
Boracay Mardi Gras	Gold Crown
Sunset Sessions at the Pearl	Pearl of the Pacific

April 10, 2004 (Saturday)

Wakeboarding Competition	Beachfront
Chill Out Sunsets	Club House Parao
Sunset Sessions at the Pearl	Pearl of the Pacific
BIGFISH Chillout Sunset Session	Waling-Waling
Nocturnal Invasion	Boracay Terraces
Addict/Studio 23 Beach House Party	Aria Beachfront
Hobie Triangle Awards Night	Nami Villas
Slinky	Hey Jude

April 11, 2004 (Sunday)

Chill Out Sunsets	Club House Parao
Sunset Sessions at the Pearl	Pearl of the Pacific

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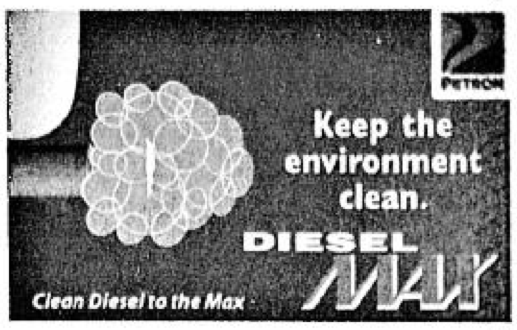
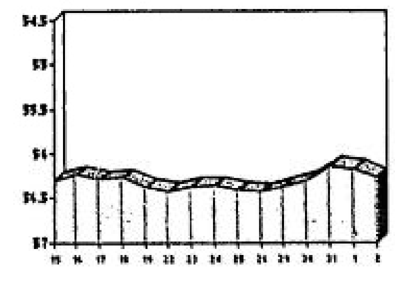


BIR, Customs exceed collection targets

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 56.275 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., April 2, 2004

¥ 104.18= $ 1

As of 5 p.m., April 2, 2004

GOLD: $424.50-425.00

per ounce Hong Kong, April 2, 2004

STOCK MARKET

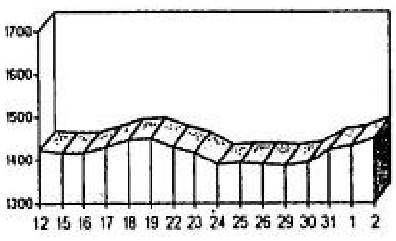
Shares up 1.24%

SHARE prices closed 1.24 percent higher yesterday, extending recent gains on select support for the bluechips led by market leader PLDT, dealers said.

They said, however, there was some concern whether the advance could be sustained against a backdrop of political uncertainty ahead of the May 10 elections and the Easter holiday break next week.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

MARCH



(See stock market report on Page B2)

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 17.80 points to close at 1,450.91, its high for the day and best performance in three weeks. The low was 1,436.99.

Gainers led losers 42 to 17, while 27 stocks were unchanged. Volume was 354.06 million shares worth P591.4 million after 390.7 million shares worth P498.2 million on Thursday.

"I think investors are buying into PLDT ... (because) the company is expected to report improved earnings this year on the strength of (its wireless unit) Smart Communications," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan has said he was comfortable with analysts' forecasts of a 2004 net profit of P17-P18 billion for PLDT compared with its profit of P11.2 billion in 2003.

Top-traded PLDT rose P15 to P990. Ayala Corp. was unchanged at P6.10 while Bank of the Philippine Islands rose 50 centavos to P45. Globe Telecom gained P10 to P840. *AFP*

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S main revenue agencies exceeded their collection targets in March, raising the chances that the Macapagal administration can meet its budget deficit goal for the first quarter of the year.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue said preliminary tax collection in March reached P32.3 billion against the target of P32.19 billion. The BIR chief earlier told reporters that preliminary figures showed his agency had missed its March target by about 3 percent.

The Bureau of Customs said its preliminary collections came in at P10.77 billion in March, beating its goal of P8.99 billion by 19.8 percent.

The two agencies accounted for 85 percent of total government revenues last year.

"It's possible the government achieved its deficit target in the first quarter as the Bureau of Internal Revenues and the Bureau of Customs exceeded their targets in March," Philippine Investor Relations Executive Director Corazon Guidote told Reuters.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed on the expenditure side."

The BOC said the higher revenue collection was partly attributed to the re-engineering of its operations, which included simplification of transaction processes and the expansion of its computerization program. It has likewise expanded the coverage of its Internet-based transactions to allow more companies to pay duties with less hassle.

The BOC's ability to surpass its monthly collection goals early in the year pushed the government to increase its full-year collection target.

The BOC is now tasked to collect P112 billion for 2004. This was the second time the government raised the bureau's collection goal. Originally, the BOC was directed to raise P105 billion, which was later increased to P110 billion.

Weak tax collection is a key reason why the government ran a budget deficit in 2004 for the 10th time in 14 years, adding to its heavy pile of foreign and domestic debt.

Ratings agency Standard and Poor's said on Thursday that a deterioration in the deficit could be one trigger for it to downgrade the country's sovereign debt rating, which is already two notches below investment grade.

The government aims to limit the accumulated deficit for the year to P58.9 billion by end-March, P79.6 billion by June and P143.3 billion by end-September.

For the first two months of 2004, the budget deficit had reached P34.57 billion. The March 2003 deficit was P27.3 billion. If repeated this March, the deficit would overshoot the first-quarter target. *With a report from Reuters*

IMF, S&P claim of bank 'bailouts' unfounded–BSP

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura has lamented the International Monetary Fund's and Standard & Poor's cricitizing the government's supposed bailout of certain banks.

"Their comments are too broad-brash," Buenaventura said, noting these institutions did not take into account the conditions and factors behind the assistance given by the government to banks like United Coconut Planters Bank and, more recently, Philippine Bank of Communications.

"I felt it was not justified," the BSP chief said.

In its latest assessment on the Philippines, the IMF expressed concern "about the high level of support being extended to problem banks by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp." The Fund reiterated its long-standing call for legislation to strengthen bank regulatory and supervisory powers and to fortify the framework for undertaking prompt corrective action.

For its part, S&P said that among the factors which could lower the country's credit rating aside from unfavorable political developments was a possible deterioration in the quality of banks' loan portfolios that may require financial assistance from the government. Other key factors cited were a further widening of the budget deficit or an unabated depreciation of the local currency.

In an interview, Buenaventura said it was unfair for these institutions to allude to the assistance earlier given to UCPB as there was no other recourse for the bank to raise capital given ownership questions still pending in court.

Last year, the governmment infused at least P20 billion in financial assistance to UCPB through PDIC. The bank suffered from heavy deposit withdrawals in December 2001 when the Supreme Court ruled that the coconut levy funds were public money.

The burden of re-capitalizing UCPB was placed in the hands of the government after its stockholders rejected the first option for the State to sell the bank, preserve its assets and put in escrow the proceeds of the sale until the ownership issue was resolved.

The BSP chief said it was likewise unfair if the institutions were referring to the recent financial assistance given to PBCom.

"The shareholders of PBCom put in their share of P3 billion. The loan is fully secured and the agreement is that they will eventually sell to a strategic partner," Buenaventura said. "It's not a bailout."

While the shareholders of PBCom will infuse an additional P3 billion to boost the bank's capital, PDIC had agreed to extend P7.6 billion in financial assistance to the bank.

Some bankers have criticized the "concessional" loans given to PBCom, which they claimed were even more generous than the assistance earlier given to semi-private Philippine National Bank.

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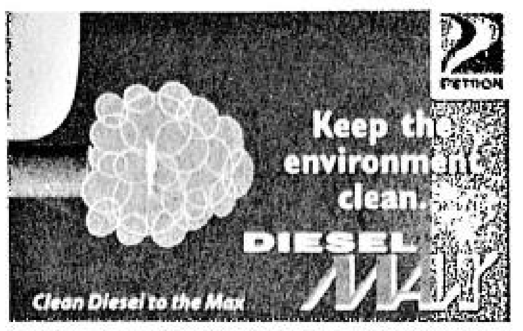
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BIR, Customs exceed collection targets

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S main revenue agencies exceeded their collection targets in March, raising the chances that the Macapagal administration can meet its budget deficit goal for the first quarter of the year.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue said preliminary tax collection in March reached P32.3 billion against the target of P32.19 billion. The BIR chief earlier told reporters that preliminary figures showed his agency had missed its March target by about 3 percent.

The Bureau of Customs said its preliminary collections came in at P10.77 billion in March, beating its goal of P8.99 billion by 19.8 percent.

The two agencies accounted for 85 percent of total government revenues last year.

"It's possible the government achieved its deficit target in the first quarter as the Bureau of Internal Revenues and the Bureau of Customs exceeded their targets in March," Philippine Investor Relations Executive Director Corazon Guidote told Reuters.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed on the expenditure side."

The BOC said the higher revenue collection was partly attributed to the re-engineering of its operations, which included simplification of transaction processes and the expansion of its computerization program. It has likewise expanded the coverage of its Internet-based transactions to allow more companies to pay duties with less hassle.

The BOC's ability to surpass its monthly collection goals early in the year pushed the government to increase its full-year collection target.

The BOC is now tasked to collect P112 billion for 2004. This was the second time the government raised the bureau's collection goal. Originally, the BOC was directed to raise P105 billion, which was later increased to P110 billion.

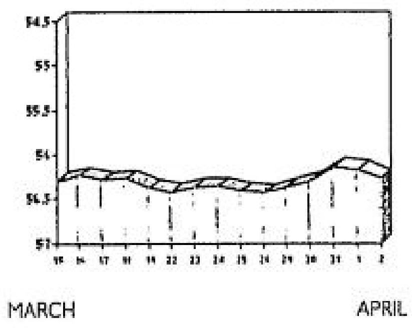
Weak tax collection is a key reason why the government ran a budget deficit in 2004 for the 10th time in 14 years, adding to its heavy pile of foreign and domestic debt.

Ratings agency Standard and Poor's said on Thursday that a deterioration in the deficit could be one trigger for it to downgrade the country's sovereign debt rating, which is already two notches below investment grade.

The government aims to limit the accumulated deficit for the year to P58.9 billion by end-March, P79.6 billion by June and P143.3 billion by end-September.

For the first two months of 2004, the budget deficit had reached P34.57 billion. The March 2003 deficit was P27.3 billion. If repeated this March, the deficit would overshoot the first-quarter target. *With a report from Reuters*

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 56.275 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., April 2, 2004

¥ 104.18= $ 1

As of 5 p.m., April 2, 2004

GOLD: $424.50-425.00

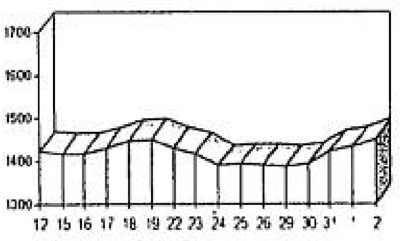
per ounce Hong Kong, April 2, 2004

STOCK MARKET

Shares up 1.24%

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

MARCH



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE prices closed 1.24 percent higher yesterday, extending recent gains on select support for the blue-chips led by market leader PLDT, dealers said.

They said, however, there was some concern whether the advance could be sustained against a backdrop of political uncertainty ahead of the May 10 elections and the Easter holiday break next week.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 17.80 points to close at 1,450.91, its high for the day and best performance in three weeks. The low was 1,436.99.

Gainers led losers 42 to 17, while 27 stocks were unchanged. Volume was 354.06 million shares worth P591.4 million after 390.7 million shares worth P498.2 million on Thursday.

"I think investors are buying into PLDT ... (because) the company is expected to report improved earnings this year on the strength of (its wireless unit) Smart Communications," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan has said he was comfortable with analysts' forecasts of a 2004 net profit of P17-P18 billion for PLDT compared with its profit of P11.2 billion in 2003.

Top-traded PLDT rose P15 to P990. Ayala Corp. was unchanged at P6.10 while Bank of the Philippine Islands rose 50 centavos to P45. Globe Telecom gained P10 to P840. *AFP*

IMF, S&P claim of bank 'bailouts' unfounded–BSP

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura has lamented the International Monetary Fund's and Standard & Poor's cricitizing the government's supposed bailout of certain banks.

"Their comments are too broad-brash," Buenaventura said, noting these institutions did not take into account the conditions and factors behind the assistance given by the government to banks like United Coconut Planters Bank and, more recently, Philippine Bank of Communications.

"I felt it was not justified," the BSP chief said.

In its latest assessment on the Philippines, the IMF expressed concern "about the high level of support being extended to problem banks by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp." The Fund reiterated its long-standing call for legislation to strengthen bank regulatory and supervisory powers and to fortify the framework for undertaking prompt corrective action.

For its part, S&P said that among the factors which could lower the country's credit rating aside from unfavorable political developments was a possible deterioration in the quality of banks' loan portfolios that may require financial assistance from the government. Other key factors cited were a further widening of the budget deficit or an unabated depreciation of the local currency.

In an interview, Buenaventura said it was unfair for these institutions to allude to the assistance earlier given to UCPB as there was no other recourse for the bank to raise capital given ownership questions still pending in court.

Last year, the governmment infused at least P20 billion in financial assistance to UCPB through PDIC. The bank suffered from heavy deposit withdrawals in December 2001 when the Supreme Court ruled that the coconut levy funds were public money.

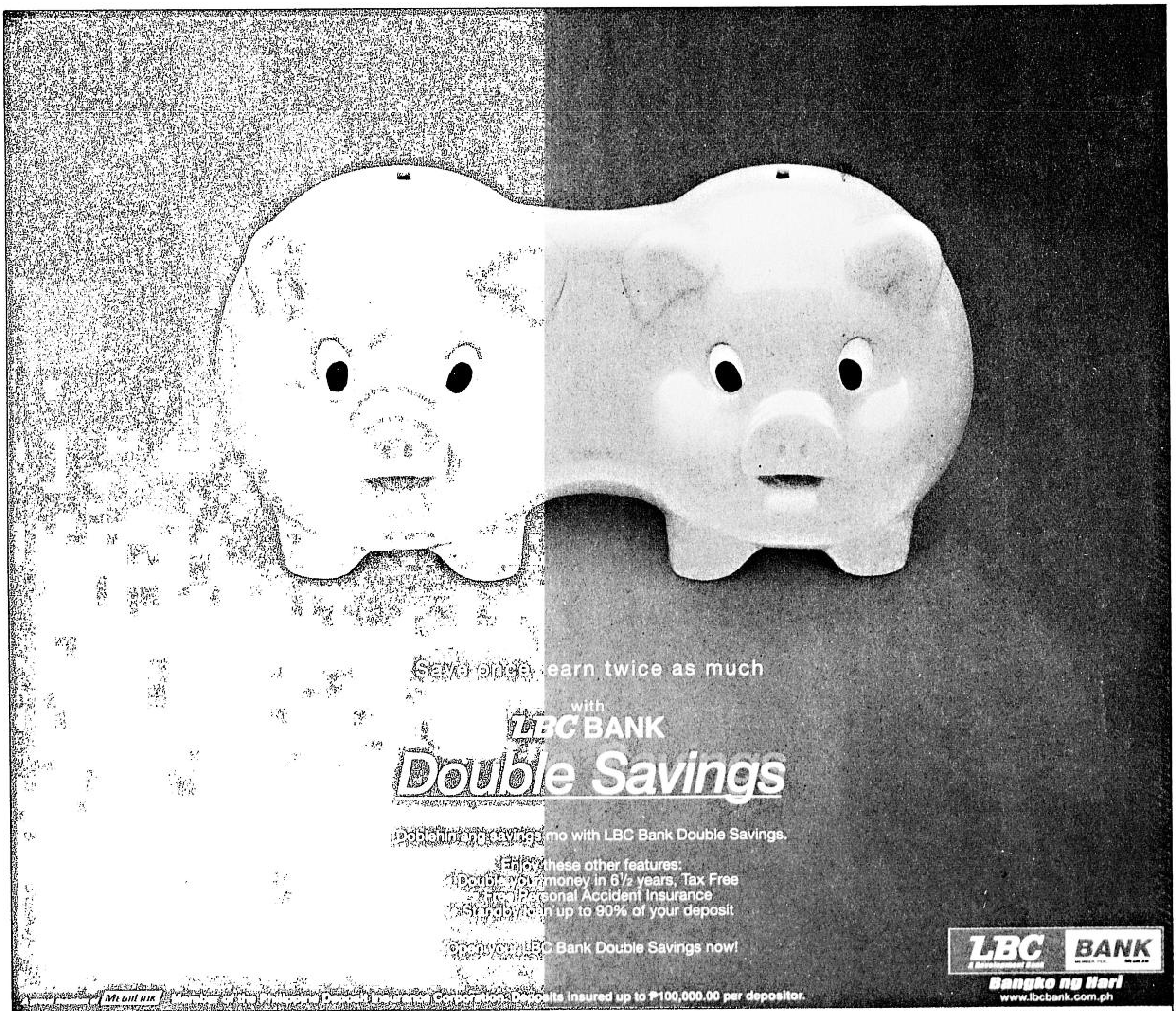
The burden of re-capitalizing UCPB was placed in the hands of the government after its stockholders rejected the first option for the State to sell the bank, preserve its assets and put in escrow the proceeds of the sale until the ownership issue was resolved.

The BSP chief said it was likewise unfair if the institutions were referring to the recent financial assistance given to PBCom.

"The shareholders of PBCom put in their share of P3 billion. The loan is fully secured and the agreement is that they will eventually sell to a strategic partner," Buenaventura said. "It's not a bailout."

While the shareholders of PBCom will infuse an additional P3 billion to boost the bank's capital, PDIC had agreed to extend P7.6 billion in financial assistance to the bank.

Some bankers have criticized the "concessional" loans given to PBCom, which they claimed were even more generous than the assistance earlier given to semi-private Philippine National Bank.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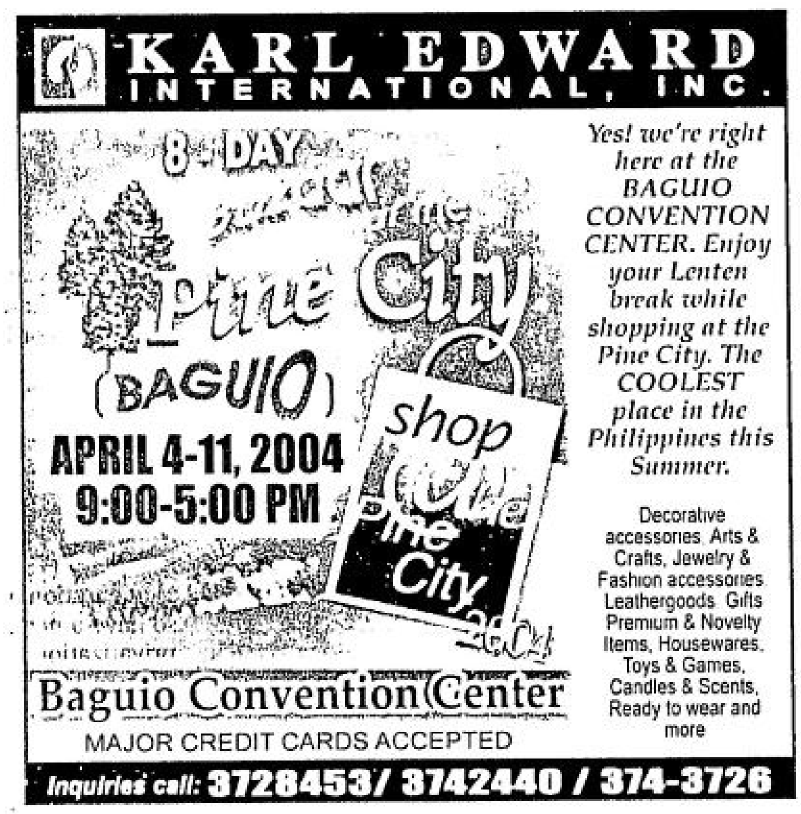
PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 2, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	16.75	17	78,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44.5	45	44.5	45	749,600
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,800
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38	38.5	38	38.5	62,800
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.55	110,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	23.75	24	23.5	23.5	572,000
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	5,300
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	200
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2060	2060	2060	2060	60
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	131	131	131	131	10
Sun Life Financial Inc .	1485	1500	1485	1500	1,270
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20	20.5	20	20.25	29,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.63	0.64	0.63	0.64	190,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	830	850	830	840	42,810
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.039	0.04	0.039	0.04	1,000,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.72	1.72	6,902,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	995	1000	985	990	184,070
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	129,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	13,100
Manila Electric Co. B	24.5	25.5	24.5	25	1,426,700
Petron Corp.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	6,922,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	110,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	200,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	35,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.95	2.95	2.75	2.75	460,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	60,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17.5	17	17.5	1,972,800
RFM Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	110,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	57	149,400
San Miguel Corp. B	71	71	71	71	244,500
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	40,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	250,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	19,231,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	14,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	1,600,000
A. Soriano Corporation	1	1	1	1	30,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	4,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	55,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.5	2,040,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.14	650,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	100,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	20.75	21.25	20.75	21.25	143,700
Ionics Inc.	1.16	1.28	1.16	1.28	12,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	5,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	2,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	5,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	3,640,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	3,430,000
Prime Orion Phils., Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	70,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14.5	14	14.5	4,800
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	75,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	5,000
Pryce Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	500,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	360,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	450,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	50,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	30,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	19.75	20.5	19.75	20.5	240,400
ATS Corp. - Preferred	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,500
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,500
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6	6	6	6	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	1,534,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.125	0.15	0.125	0.15	30,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0.125	0.12	0.125	570,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	90,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.08	1.02	1.06	16,480,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.17	0.18	0.14	0.18	61,160,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.*	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	20,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.0975	0.1	0.0975	0.1	32,400,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	250,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.9	6	5.9	6	2,793,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	25,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.22	7,530,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,280,000
Omico Corp.	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	9,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	200,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.37	920,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1.585.940	52,969,160.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	193,100,380	481,287,035.00
PRO	115,327,000	54,510,500.00
Mining	43,930,000	2,444,700.00
GRAND TOTALS :	353,943 320	591,211,395.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	422.43	UP 3.54
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,267.76	UP 24.97
PRO	520.89	UP 12.00
Mining	1,483.28	UP 2.97
OIL	1.12	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	940.42	UP 7.75
Composite	1,450.91	UP 17.80

NO. OF ADVANCES: 42, NO. OF DECLINES: 17, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 27, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 86, NO. OF TRADES: 1,565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DISCLOSURES

ATR Kim Eng Financial Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 28 with record date on April 21.

* * *

SPI Technologies Inc. disclosed that the company's board unanimously voted to accept TH Lee Putnam Ventures' offer to acquire all issued and to be issued share capital of the company. Also, the board deemed it appropriate to postpone the holding of its annual stockholders' meeting this year.

* * *

UNIVERSAL Robina Corp. disclosed the appointment of Mr. Bienvenido S. Bautista as executive vice president effective April 1.

* * *

SOUTH China Resources Inc. applied for an Exploration Contract in the Cuyo Platform/Offshore Northeast Palawan area.

* * *

BAGUIO Gold Holdings Corp. moved its scheduled May 25 stockholders' meeting to a later date.

* * *

PRUDENTIAL Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 19, 4 p.m. at the banks's board room, 3rd floor Prudential Bank Bldg., Makati. Stockholders of record as of April 20 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

DMCI Holdings Inc. in relation to Seminara Mining Corp.'s increase in capital stock, subscribed and paid for over 19.6 million common shares.

* * *

VIVANT Corp. and **Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.** complied with all the closing requirements under the memorandum of agreement last March 16.

* * *

PHILIPPINE National Construction Corp. confirmed the nomination of Pastor R. Ramos Jr. as its acting president and CEO.

* * *

UNION BANK of the Philippines will hold its annual stockholders' meeting at the Manila A&B Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La on May 28 at 2 p.m. Stockholders of record as of April 16 are entitled to notice of and to participate in the meeting.

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. bought 400.000 of its own shares at P1.32 each.

Compiled by Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

April 2, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.808538	1.000000	56.1710
Japan	Yen	0.007796	0.009642	0.5416
United Kingdom	Pound	1.501860	1.857500	104.3376
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.103824	0.128409	7.2129
Switzerland	Franc	0.640173	0.791766	44.4743
Canada	Dollar	0.619238	0.765873	43.0199
Singapore	Dollar	0.484068	0.598695	33.6293
Australia	Dollar	0.618953	0.765521	43.0001
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.145802	2.653928	149.0738
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.215616	0.266674	14.9793
Brunei	Dollar	0.482623	0.596908	33.5289
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000095	0.000117	0.0066
Thailand	Baht	0.020663	0.025556	1.4355
UAE	Dirham	0.220154	0.272287	15.2946
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.236800	69.4723
Argentina	Peso	0.283946	0.351185	19.7264
Brazil	Real	0.279771	0.346021	19.4363
Denmark	Kroner	0.134271	0.166066	9.3281
India	Rupee	0.018673	0.023095	1.2973
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212802	0.263193	14.7838
Mexico	New Peso	0.072236	0.089342	5.0184
New Zealand	Dollar	0.539709	0.667512	37.4948
Norway	Kroner	0.118612	0.146699	8.2402
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014148	0.017498	0.9829
South Africa	Rand	0.128110	0.158446	8.9001
Korea	Won	0.000709	0.000877	0.0493
Sweden	Kroner	0.108390	0.134057	7.5301
Syria	Pound	0.018326	0.022665	1.2731
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024658	0.030497	1.7130
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000422	0.000522	0.0293

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Sugar prices continue to improve

NFA intervention pays off; sugar stabilizes at ₱710-₱750 per 50 kilos

By Christine A. Gaylican

SUGAR prices at the millgate have stabilized at a range of P710 to P750 per 50 kilogram bag in recent weeks, following the intervention of the the National Food Authority, according to the Department of Agriculture.

"Prices have continued to improve, even as the NFA has started to slow down its buying activities this April," Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. said yesterday.

Millgate prices in Bacolod last Thursday sold from P703 to as much as P742 per 50-kg bag. This week's prices, on the average, is 2.24 percent higher than the millgate prices posted on March 25. During that period, sugar sold from P691 to P726 per 50-kg bag, Lorenzo said.

The NFA has allotted P1 billion for the sugar-buying activities, on orders of President Macapagal-Arroyo who wanted to prop up the price of sugar after it dropped to a low of P600 per 50-kg bag early this year.

The budget is good for 70,000 tons—or 1.4 million kgs—of sugar. The sugar-buying program will go on until the fund is exhausted, according to the DA.

"Sugar Regulator Administrator James Ledesma is on top of this, and he is coordinating closely with the NFA on adjustments to the schedule of buying," Lorenzo said.

Ledesma reported that as of April 1, the NFA has bought a total of 226,959 kg of sugar worth P159 million in Bacolod alone.

The NFA may dispose of the sugar through their rolling stores. Part of the stocks may also be supplied to industrial users or the local beverage market.

However, Lorenzo clarified that the NFA would not compete with local traders since they plan to dispose at the end of the milling season, or sometime in July or August.

The move, according to industry sources, is a result of the intense lobbying done by local sugar producers, who sought Ms Macapagal's help to stop the decline of sugar prices.

Sugar producers generate about 90,000 metric tons of sugar per week, or about 360,000 MT per month. But consumption has been pegged flat at 150,000 MT.

Recently, sugar producers had experienced a slump. They said the slide in local prices was caused by the technical smuggling of sugar and weak prices in the world market, aside from the flat demand.

HON. VINCENT PEREZ, JR
DR. FEDERIC

ENERGY Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. huddles with Federico M. Macaranas, PhD, executive director of the Asian Institute of Management's Policy Center, during the recent forum on the state of the power industry held at the AIM conference hall in Makati City.

RUDY ESPERAS

Nenaco execs hit for fueling Tsuneishi row

By Clarissa S. Batino

A METRO Pacific Corp. executive on Wednesday criticized officials of Metro Pacific's shipping subsidiary for allowing the debt problem with a Japanese ship repair firm to get out of hand.

Manuel Pangilinan, Metro Pacific chair, was described to be upset when he met with officials of Negros Navigation Corp. three days ago at the headquarters of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. to go over the debt issue with Tsuneishi Heavy Industries, a ship repair and dry-docking firm based in Cebu City.

Nenaco is 97.4 percent owned by Metro Pacific, a subsidiary of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd. where Pangilinan serves as managing director.

Sources said Pangilinan was not happy with the way the local shipping company handled the row with Tsuneishi, a company partly owned by the Aboitiz Group which is in the shipping business as well.

"They (Nenaco officials) were grilled by no less than Mr. Pangilinan," one source said. "He asked so many questions. He was upset with how things turned out."

The Nenaco meeting took place two days after the shipping firm asked a Manila court to grant its petition for debt rehabilitation and suspension of debt payments amounting to P2.5 billion.

Nenaco had claimed that Aboitiz had been trying to discredit the company, affecting sales, operations and its ability to pay its debts.

With the court petition, Nenaco officials hoped to prevent creditors from seizing assets of the firm, as what the Aboitiz-affiliate Tsuneishi firm had been trying to do, according to an official.

Nenaco owes Tsuneishi about P111 million.

ING Bank to raise $75M for PNOC-EDC

By Doris C. Dumlao

DUTCH lender ING Bank is set to raise $75 million for the state-controlled Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. through a loan syndicate over the next three weeks.

ING Bank country manager Manuel Salak told the INQUIRER that the PNOC-EDC's new borrowing would carry sovereign guarantee.

He said the fund-raising would have to be completed before the May 10 elections.

Recently, ING Bank likewise raised P12.5 billion for the National Power Corp. through five- to seven-year zero coupon bonds.

"People are trying to raise money before the elections," Salak said.

PNOC-EDC, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Philippine National Oil Co., plans to use the proceeds to cover build-operate-transfer obligations for various power projects.

The company expects to generate better cash flows once its BOT obligations expire in the years 2006 to 2008.

Last year, PNOC-EDC also raised $90 million from a syndicate of banks to cover BOT obligations.

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By Abigail L. Ho

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Jose Alejandro, PCCI energy committee chair, told industry stakeholders at the Asian Institute of Management that the nominal amount of electricity to be traded in the spot market would only make the WESM "another cost center whose added value in the process of lowering power rates effectively is still to be seen."

He explained that based on Republic Act 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira), and the actual peak demands in different parts of the country, the WESM would serve as a venue for free competition for only 600 megawatts (MW) of power in Luzon, 100 MW in the Visayas, and 100 MW in Mindanao.

"Is the WESM, as added cost, justifiable?" Alejandro asked. "How shall the WESM, as a venue for 'freedom of choice' and 'freedom to sell' operate effectively in the presence of dominant (generation companies) and dominant DUs in the market place?"

Amcham energy committee chair Laurie Dwayne Sasko also questioned the creditworthiness of WESM participants.

"A creditworthy distribution utility is also required for an effective implementation of the (WESM) as envisioned under the Epira," Sasko said. "Without creditworthy parties on both sides of the transaction within the spot market, the system will become inefficient and will ultimately fail."

Sasko said the implementation of the WESM might also have a negative impact on the privatization of the National Power Corp.'s generation assets because of valuation issues that might arise.

Under the WESM, electricity will be traded via the Internet on an hourly basis. Much like trading in the stock market, electricity prices are not fixed. These will fluctuate depending on the supply, demand and even the time of trading.

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Read more about her on April 4, 2004.

Sugar prices continue to improve

NFA intervention pays off; sugar stabilizes at ₱710-₱750 per 50 kilos

By Christine A. Gaylican

SUGAR prices at the millgate have stabilized at a range of P710 to P750 per 50 kilogram bag in recent weeks, following the intervention of the the National Food Authority, according to the Department of Agriculture.

"Prices have continued to improve, even as the NFA has started to slow down its buying activities this April," Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. said yesterday.

Millgate prices in Bacolod last Thursday sold from P703 to as much as P742 per 50-kg bag. This week's prices, on the average, is 2.24 percent higher than the millgate prices posted on March 25. During that period, sugar sold from P691 to P726 per 50-kg bag, Lorenzo said.

The NFA has allotted P1 billion for the sugar-buying activities, on orders of President Macapagal-Arroyo who wanted to prop up the price of sugar after it dropped to a low of P600 per 50-kg bag early this year.

The budget is good for 70,000 tons—or 1.4 million kgs—of sugar. The sugar-buying program will go on until the fund is exhausted, according to the DA.

"Sugar Regulator Administrator James Ledesma is on top of this, and he is coordinating closely with the NFA on adjustments to the schedule of buying," Lorenzo said.

Ledesma reported that as of April 1, the NFA has bought a total of 226,959 kg of sugar worth P159 million in Bacolod alone.

The NFA may dispose of the sugar through their rolling stores. Part of the stocks may also be supplied to industrial users or the local beverage market.

However, Lorenzo clarified that the NFA would not compete with local traders since they plan to dispose at the end of the milling season, or sometime in July or August.

The move, according to industry sources, is a result of the intense lobbying done by local sugar producers, who sought Ms Macapagal's help to stop the decline of sugar prices.

Sugar producers generate about 90,000 metric tons of sugar per week, or about 360,000 MT per month. But consumption has been pegged flat at 150,000 MT.

Recently, sugar producers had experienced a slump. They said the slide in local prices was caused by the technical smuggling of sugar and weak prices in the world market, aside from the flat demand.

Power Industry
Power Challenge
HON
DR. FEDERIC

ENERGY Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. huddles with Federico M. Macaranas, PhD, executive director of the Asian Institute of Management's Policy Center, during the recent forum on the state of the power industry held at the AIM conference hall in Makati City.

RUDY ESPERAS

Nenaco execs hit for fueling Tsuneishi row

By Clarissa S. Batino

A METRO Pacific Corp. executive on Wednesday criticized officials of Metro Pacific's shipping subsidiary for allowing the debt problem with a Japanese ship repair firm to get out of hand.

Manuel Pangilinan, Metro Pacific chair, was described to be upset when he met with officials of Negros Navigation Corp. three days ago at the headquarters of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. to go over the debt issue with Tsuneishi Heavy Industries, a ship repair and dry-docking firm based in Cebu City.

Nenaco is 97.4 percent owned by Metro Pacific, a subsidiary of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd. where Pangilinan serves as managing director.

Sources said Pangilinan was not happy with the way the local shipping company handled the row with Tsuneishi, a company partly owned by the Aboitiz Group which is in the shipping business as well.

"They (Nenaco officials) were grilled by no less than Mr. Pangilinan," one source said. "He asked so many questions. He was upset with how things turned out."

The Nenaco meeting took place two days after the shipping firm asked a Manila court to grant its petition for debt rehabilitation and suspension of debt payments amounting to P2.5 billion.

Nenaco had claimed that Aboitiz had been trying to discredit the company, affecting sales, operations and its ability to pay its debts.

With the court petition, Nenaco officials hoped to prevent creditors from seizing assets of the firm, as what the Aboitiz-affiliate Tsuneishi firm had been trying to do, according to an official.

Nenaco owes Tsuneishi about P111 million.

ING Bank to raise $75M for PNOC-EDC

By Doris C. Dumlao

DUTCH lender ING Bank is set to raise $75 million for the state-controlled Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. through a loan syndicate over the next three weeks.

ING Bank country manager Manuel Salak told the INQUIRER that the PNOC-EDC's new borrowing would carry sovereign guarantee.

He said the fundraising would have to be completed before the May 10 elections.

Recently, ING Bank likewise raised P12.5 billion for the National Power Corp. through five- to seven-year zero coupon bonds.

"People are trying to raise money before the elections," Salak said.

PNOC-EDC, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Philippine National Oil Co., plans to use the proceeds to cover build-operate-transfer obligations for various power projects.

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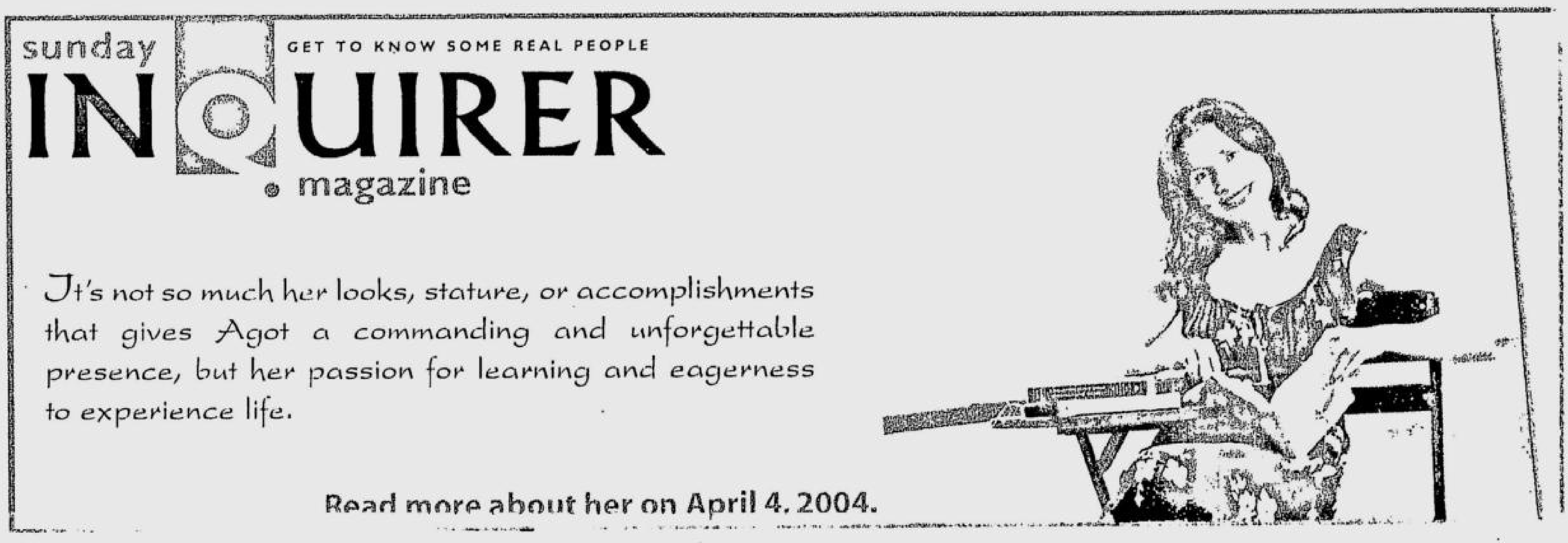
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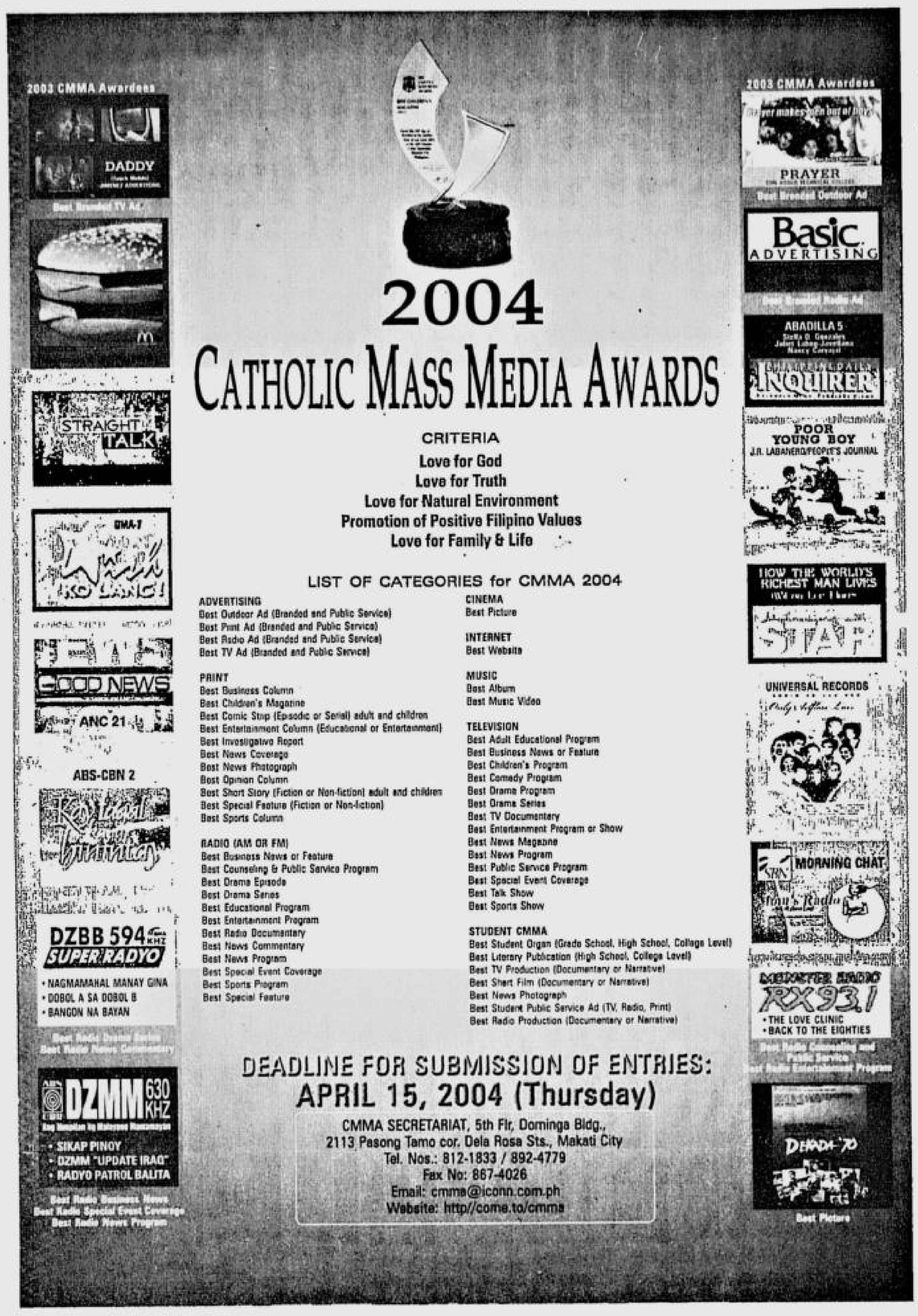

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CATHOLIC MASS MEDIA AWARDS

CRITERIA
Love for God
Love for Truth
Love for Natural Environment
Promotion of Positive Filipino Values
Love for Family & Life

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Best News Program
Best Public Service Program
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Manufacturing up worldwide in March

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Economists also raised concerns that improvement in US manufacturing, driven in large part by a weaker dollar, would eventually undermine the competitiveness of export-dependent European and Japanese producers.

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Surveys in Europe showed euro zone manufacturing growing at its fastest pace in over three years, with improvements in all three of continental Europe's biggest economies—Germany, France and Italy, plus in Great Britain.

The euro zone index rose to 53.3 in March from February's 52.5, going against economists who predicted a fall to 52.3. *Reuters*

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"We hope that by this time next month, rather than announce a further increase from 6 to 7 percent, we will be able to announce the sanctions have been lifted," she said.

The US Congress has been working on legislation to replace the tax breaks, which the WTO banned for being an illegal export subsidy. Gonzalez said the EU applauded the work done so far by US lawmakers.

In Washington, US Commerce Secretary Don Evans warned the rising sanctions "have the potential to cause serious harm to (the US) economy, which is finally experiencing a rebound."

He urged Congress to "act now" to pass legislation.

The Senate remains stalled on the corporate tax and trade bill due to an impasse over an amendment on an unrelated issue concerning overtime pay for American workers.

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They are expected to amount to $300 million this year and to be worth around $666 million if they are extended for the whole of 2005.

The amounts are less than the $4 billion the WTO originally authorized the EU to impose in sanctions as European Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy wanted to avoid hitting EU-US trade ties too severely. *Reuters*

STORM HEAVEN!

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A National Call to
Prayer and Fasting
for Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections
March 31 to May 9, 2004

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We experienced your Mighty Hand at EDSA, where peace was gained against all adversities. And now,
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- That every Filipino citizen shall exercise responsibly his right & duty to vote
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- To ensure the safety of all polling personnel, teachers, watchers, candidates and their supporters
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	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
MAY	26	27	28	29	30	1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

I choose this mode of fast
☐ One full meal a day ☐ No drink ☐ No food and drink
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Japan officials upbeat on economic growth

TOKYO—Japanese officials were upbeat about the country's economic recovery on Friday but denied speculation that the improvement had led to a change in their policy of resisting a rise in the yen.

Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki and Economics Minister Heizo Takenaka said the Bank of Japan's "tankan" business survey, released a day earlier, suggested Japan's export-led rebound was spreading to the long-lagging domestic sector.

But Vice Finance Minister for International Affairs Zembei Mizoguchi, asked whether the economy had recovered enough to warrant a scaling back in Japan's controversial currency market intervention, said only that its policy had not altered.

"Our basic stance is unchanged," Mizoguchi, Japan's top financial diplomat, told reporters.

The remarks follow a sharp rise in the yen this week to four-year highs against the dollar amid growing optimism toward Japan's economy and speculation that Tokyo would tone down its fight to prevent a further yen appreciation.

That optimism was underscored by the quarterly tankan, which showed business sentiment was improving not only among the big manufacturers but also at smaller firms and non-manufacturers.

"We are seeing an improvement in business sentiment among non-manufacturers and smaller businesses as well," Tanigaki told a news conference after a morning Cabinet meeting.

Takenaka echoed this view, expressing confidence about growth projections.

"The figures were mostly within my expectations. It is a sign that the economic recovery is continuing," Takenaka told a separate news conference.

He also said the recovery looked sustainable. *Reuters*

Ex-IMF chief economist sees 4.7% global growth

WASHINGTON—Asia and the United States will propel the world economy to the fastest growth pace in a generation in 2004, former IMF chief economist Michael Mussa predicted Thursday.

Western Europe would lag, but most of the rest of the world would join the 2004 upswing, Mussa, senior fellow at the Washington-based Institute for International Economics, said.

He forecast year-over-year global growth of 4.75 percent in 2004, "equal to the strongest performance in a generation," moderating to 4.0 percent growth in 2005.

"This slowdown partly reflects the likelihood of necessary and desirable slowdowns from rapid economic expansions in several economies, most notably China," Mussa said.

He identified a risk that market reactions or government attempts to cool over-heating would lead to a more a serious global economic slowdown by next year.

"In this regard, the sharp recent rise in world oil prices probably poses the most important near-term risk to global growth while the possibility of a general rise in inflationary pressures poses the greater medium-term threat," he told a conference here.

Mussa said short term real interest rates were very low in most industrial economies in an attempt to combat economic weakness, posing a serious challenge to future monetary policy.

"In this situation, if monetary policy is tightened too much too soon, the result can be an unnecessary asset market crunch and economic slowdown and monetary policy may have relatively little room to ease in order to counteract this outcome," he said. *AFP*

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But Vice Finance Minister for International Affairs Zembei Mizoguchi, asked whether the economy had recovered enough to warrant a scaling back in Japan's controversial currency market intervention, said only that its policy had not altered.

"Our basic stance is unchanged," Mizoguchi, Japan's top financial diplomat, told reporters.

The remarks follow a sharp rise in the yen this week to four-year highs against the dollar amid growing optimism toward Japan's economy and speculation that Tokyo would tone down its fight to prevent a further yen appreciation.

That optimism was underscored by the quarterly tankan, which showed business sentiment was improving not only among the big manufacturers but also at smaller firms and non-manufacturers.

"We are seeing an improvement in business sentiment among non-manufacturers and smaller businesses as well," Tanigaki told a news conference after a morning Cabinet meeting.

Takenaka echoed this view, expressing confidence about growth projections.

"The figures were mostly within my expectations. It is a sign that the economic recovery is continuing," Takenaka told a separate news conference.

He also said the recovery looked sustainable. *Reuters*

Ex-IMF chief economist sees 4.7% global growth

WASHINGTON—Asia and the United States will propel the world economy to the fastest growth pace in a generation in 2004, former IMF chief economist Michael Mussa predicted Thursday.

Western Europe would lag, but most of the rest of the world would join the 2004 upswing, Mussa, senior fellow at the Washington-based Institute for International Economics, said.

He forecast year-over-year global growth of 4.75 percent in 2004, "equal to the strongest performance in a generation," moderating to 4.0 percent growth in 2005.

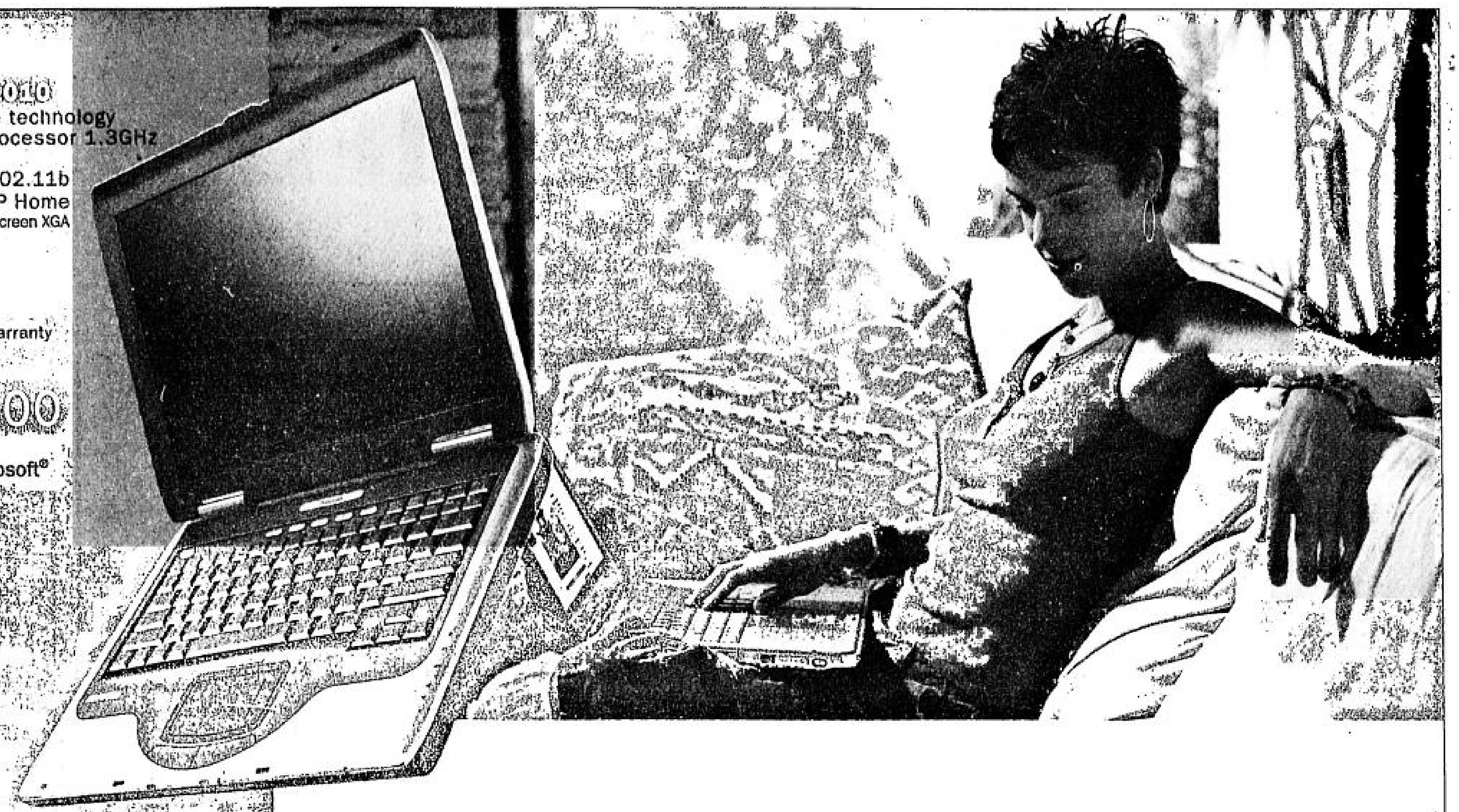
"This slowdown partly reflects the likelihood of necessary and desirable slowdowns from rapid economic expansions in several economies, most notably China," Mussa said.

He identified a risk that market reactions or government attempts to cool over-heating would lead to a more a serious global economic slowdown by next year.

"In this regard, the sharp recent rise in world oil prices probably poses the most important near-term risk to global growth while the possibility of a general rise in inflationary pressures poses the greater medium-term threat," he told a conference here.

Mussa said short term real interest rates were very low in most industrial economies in an attempt to combat economic weakness, posing a serious challenge to future monetary policy.

"In this situation, if monetary policy is tightened too much too soon, the result can be an unnecessary asset market crunch and economic slowdown and monetary policy may have relatively little room to ease in order to counteract this outcome," he said. *AFP*

**Compaq Presario X1010**

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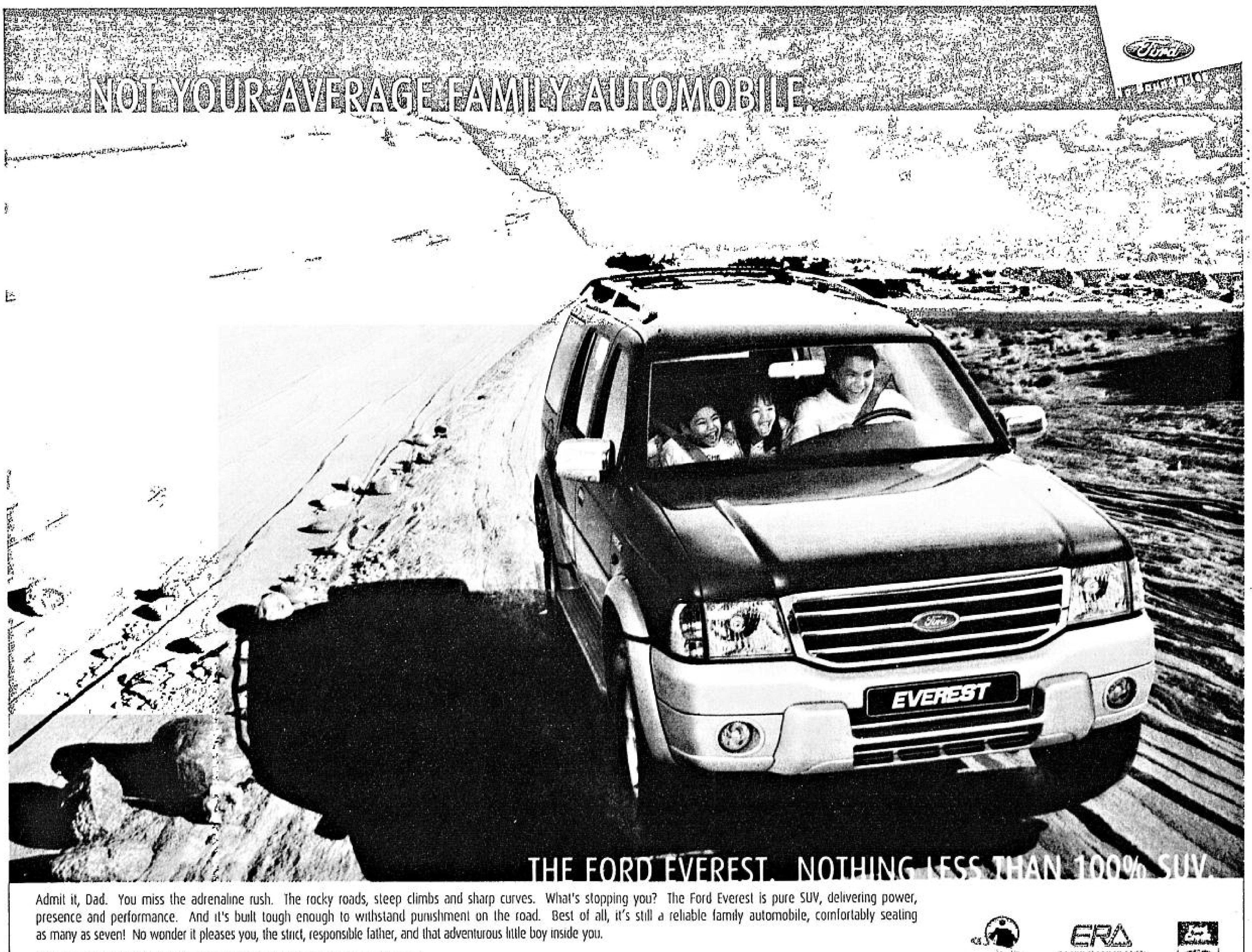
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(PDI-April 3, 10 & 17, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CRESENCA VILLAPANE-TAC-AN was extrajudicially settled among her heirs on May 16, 2003 under Deed, as Doc. No. 632, Page 72, Book LII, Series of 2003 of Notary Public Teresita Palma-Donasco of Tandag, Surigao del Sur and Doc. No. 20, Page No. 5, Book LIX, Series of 2003 of Notary Public Cipriano U. Asili of Batangas City.
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2. HOLZER 1436 EDGEBINDER
   Use to trim excesseand bind edges with vinyl to completely wrap the board for added protection
3. MORBIDELLI MACHINING CENTER
   (Model A502SR C.N.C.)
   Use to routes and bores to precise measurement to capture the profile of intricate designs with consistent quality.
4. ORMAC MACHINE MEMBRANE PRESS
5. AUTOMATIC IMPULSE SEALING (PE) PACKAGING MACHINE FFS MACHINE VOLPAK VEB-280
6. AUTOMATIC FILLING/PACKING MACHINE

For more details please contact:
Edith Gener Tel. Nos. 8437671, 8178211, 8161384, 8438204 Fax No. 8438206
Alice Morales Tel. Nos. 8438061, 8433190 Fax No. 8161691
Nilda Agoo Tel. No. 8444895
Chito Arceo Tel. No. 8444895
Ruben Santos Tel. No. 8434295

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE

FASHION DESIGNER Male 7226739 ; 9272953230 Lou

Male Masseur call 0921-2225577

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

BEED Teacher Call 655-0609

Rush Good Maid NBI 4307061

Sec/Manicurist/Masahista 7215055 / 7212797

PIMENTEL SPONSORS SENATE BILL 2710 (THE ARCHITECTURE LAW) :
Senator Aquilino Pimentel sponsored Senate Bill 2710 where he recently delivered his sponsorship speech in the Senate Session Hall. The proposed law repeals R.A. 545 – "Regulating the Practice of Architecture" – which is already 53-year old and has served its purpose. Due to many changes in the practice of architecture, in the construction industry and in preparation for globalization, the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP), The Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA), and the Architecture Advocacy International Foundation, Inc. (AAIF, Inc.) assisted in the drafting of the new law. Shown in the photo taken in Senate Session Hall are (from left) Architects Armando Alli, AAIF Legislation Dep't. Director; Elmor Vita, AAIF Legislation member; Nanette B. Segovia, AAIF Legislation member; Senator Pimentel; Architects Greg Timbol, AAIF president and chair; Robert Sac, UAP National president.

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-003

PD Ref. No.: PB040122-AA0016
PR No.: ATO-03-003442

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: Provided, however, That Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of :

   1 Lot - Supply & Delivery of Helicopter Rotor System & Propeller Digital Balancing Equipment
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the attached Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents.

   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is P3,498,000.00 to be sourced from the ***Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.***
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **March 31 to April 29, 2004** at The BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **April 16, 2004** at **2:00 p.m.** at the Admin Conference Room, G/F TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **10:00 a.m.** of **April 30, 2004** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Ave. cor. BIR Rd., Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - April 3 & 11, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit No. 6, Iloilo City
Tel. No.: 3378812 / 3373549 / 3376006 Telefax: 3364219

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture, Regional Field Unit No. 6, Iloilo City invites all interested dealers/suppliers to apply for Registration & Eligibility and to Bid for the procurement of the following items:

1. **1,425 units PEDAL RICE THRESHER**

   L-25 inches W-28 inches H-30 inches
   Materials:
   a) Body: Marine plywood, #26 plain GI sheet 1/8" x 1-1/2" angle bar, 2'x2' Hardwood
   b) Rotary drum: Marine plywood, 1" x 3" x 18-1/2" (12 pcs.). Tie wire # 10

   Terms of Purchase:
   1. Delivered from source to DA-WESVIARC, Hamungaya, Jaro, Iloilo City - 815 units
   2. Delivered from source to DA Quarantine Office, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental - 610 units

   Approved Budget : P 4,275,000.00
   Minimum Required Bid Security : 105,875.00
2. **One (1) unit CORN SHELLER**

   Output Capacity - 2.5 tons shelled corn based on 18-20% MC
   Engine - 10-12 Hp Diesel engine (Watercooled)

Shelling recovery % min.	97.0
Shelling efficiency % min.	99.50
Lose % max	
a) Blower	1.0
b) Separation	1.0
c) Unshelled	0.5
d) Scattering	0.5
Purity % min.	98.0
Mechanically damage kernel % max	3.0
Net crack kernel % max.	5.0
Max. level dB Max	100

Warranty 6 months on parts & service (excluding consumable parts)
Type – Mobile
With complete accessories containing tools manual
All brand new
Other requirement – AMTEC test
Terms of purchase:
1. Delivered from source to DS Benedicto, Negros Occidental
Approved Budget : P 95,000.00
Minimum Required Bid Security : 2,375.00

The following are the related activities and schedule:

• Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent, Registration & Eligibility Requirements	April 19, 2004 not later than 5:00 p.m.
• Issuance of Bid Documents	April 23, 2004
• Pre Bid conference	May 3, 2004, 9:00 a.m. DA War Room
• Deadline for Submission of Bids	May 17, 2004, 9:30 a.m. DA War Room
• Opening of Bids	May 17, 2004, 10:00 a.m. DA War Room

Bid proposals exceeding the stated Approved Budget shall be rejected outright.

All Bids shall be marked "DO NOT OPEN BEFORE (date & time of opening of Bids)" and addressed as follows:

The Chairman, BAC
Department of Agriculture RFU6
Parola, Iloilo City
Bid No. 2004-06 & 07

The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive defects or formality therein, and accept responsive proposals most advantageous to the government and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidders for expenses and losses that may be incurred in the preparation of Bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. RICARDO D. OBLENA, CESO III**
Regional Executive Director

(PDI – April 3 & 11, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit 12
S.K Pendatun St., Cotabato City
Telephone # (064) 421-3299
TeleFax No. (064) 421-3789

PINOY 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture, Regional Office No. 12, Cotabato City invites all interested dealers/suppliers of fertilizers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement of Urea Fertilizers to be distributed to the following provinces:

1. Cotabato Province
2. Sultan Kudarat Province
3. Saranggani Province
4. South Cotabato Province

Approved Budget **P9,769,500.00**

Minimum required Bid Security is One percent (1%) of the Approved Budget if in the form of Cash, Certified check, Cashier's check, Manager's check, Bank draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit and Two and half percent (2 1/2%) of the Approved Budget if in the form of Surety Bond.

Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent and eligibility requirements shall be on April 6, 2004, at the Office of the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Department of Agriculture, Regional Office No. 12, Cotabato City.

Issuance of Bid documents, which shall be obtained at the office of the Supply Officer, Department of Agriculture, Region XII, Cotabato City will be on April 12, 2004.

Pre-bid conference will be on April 13, 2004 at 9:00 o' clock in the Morning.

Deadline for the submission of Bids will be on April 26, 2004 at 9:30 in the Morning and the opening of bids shall be on April 26, 2004 at 10:00 o'clock in the Morning at the Office of the BAC Chairman, Department of Agriculture, Region XII, Cotabato City.

Bid proposals exceeding the stated Approved Budget shall be rejected outright. All bids shall be marked "DO NOT OPEN BEFORE (date & time of opening of bids)" and addressed to:

The Chairman, BAC Department of Agriculture,
Regional Office No. 12
Cotabato City

The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to reject any and or all bids, waive defects or formality therein, and accept responsive proposals most advantageous to the government and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidders for expenses and losses that may be incurred in the preparation of Bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ABDUL WAHAB A. BAYAO
Vice-Chairman, BAC
Officer-in-Charge

(PDI – March 28 & April 3, 2004)

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FINAL INVITATION TO UNDERTAKE THE PROPOSED ISABEL, LEYTE, RECLAMATION PROJECT, PROVINCE OF LEYTE, REGION VIII, UNDER A JOINT VENTURE ARRANGEMENT

The Municipality of Isabel, Leyte (Philippines) is inviting interested parties to submit application to apply for **eligibility**, and **subsequents to bid**, of Pre-qualified to undertake the reclamation and development of about **ONE HUNDRED TWENTY EIGHT (128) hectares of foreshore and offshore areas** (Project) along Dupong Bay, Isabel, Leyte intended to mixed use development such as commercial, industrial, residential among others.

The project shall be undertaken on a joint venture arrangement with the Municipality whereby the Proponent/Developer shall advance all costs of reclamation and development and shall be paid in the form of land rental or land to be reclaimed.

The Proponent/Developer must show proof of its legal, technical and financial capability and must submit the following pre-qualification documents attached to its letter of intent addressed to the Municipality to undertake the project.

1. *Non-Refundable Filing Fee in the amount of Php22,000.00 inclusive of VAT payable to the Municipality in the form of cash, manager's check or cashier's check;*
2. *Original Copy of SEC Certification of Good Standing Record;*
3. *Complete set of legal documents of the organization, ie, company Profile or Principal Proponent and each firm and members if consortium, SEC Registration, Articles of Incorporation & By-laws, and Company Profile, Business Registration and License Papers.*
4. *Audited Financial Statements for the last three (3) years (balance sheets and income statement) of Principal Proponent duly filed/stamped received by BIR.*
5. *Affidavit of undertaking that if awarded the contract to provide financing for the project estimated to be not less than Php1.587 Billion.*
6. *Credit lines in specific amount issued and certified by reputable banks and financing institutions.*

All qualified Proponent(s)/Developer(s) shall be advised to submit letters of Intent and its project feasibility study.

Deadline for submission of letters of Intent to undertake the project including required attachment shall be on **May 18, 2004** at 10.00 A.M. at the Office of the Mayor, Isabel, Leyte, Tel No. (053) 337-2083.

(Sgd.) **HON. ROBERTO P. FUENTES, JR.**
Municipal Mayor

(PDI-April 1, 2 & 3, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION
North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
P.O. Box 70, U.P., Diliman, Quezon City
TIN 0000-784-336

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) through its Bidding and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following items to be delivered to **SILAY-HPCO**, as follows:

SILAY-HPCO ACEF PROJECT

PROJECT 1 : UPGRADING OF MILL EQUIPMENT - INSTALLATION OF CANE SHREDDER

		APPROVED BUDGET
LOT 1	- Upgrade of Turbodyne Steam Turbine, Engineering and Equipment	- Php 1,700,000.00
LOT 2	- Upgrade of Turbodyne Gearbox, Engineering Equipment and Commissioning	- 3,900,000.00
LOT 3	- Feed Drum Gear Reducer	- 800,000.00
LOT 4	- Heavy Duty Shredder Rotor Including Shaft, Hubs, Pivot Pins, Swinging Hammers and Bearings	- 4,500,000.00
	TOTAL BUDGET	**Php 10,960,000.00**

PROJECT 2 : REPLACEMENT OF MILL'S DSM SCREEN TO ROTARY SCREEN

LOT 1	- Rotary Cylindrical Juice Screen and Accessories	- Php 4,660,000.00
LOT 2	- Structural Support for Rotary Juice Screen	- 900,000.00
LOT 3	- 1 unit Spare Juice Screen	- 1,440,000.00
	TOTAL BUDGET	**Php 7,000,000.00**

Schedule of Bidding Activities

Issuance of Eligibility & Bidding Documents	**April 6, 2004 - April 19, 2004** 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM SRA Bidding Secretariat, 3rd Floor, Annex Bldg. Sugar Regulatory Administration North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City for a non-refundable fee of Php 500.00
Pre-Bid Conference	**April 12, 2004 - 9:00 AM**
Submission & Opening of Eligibility & Bid Envelope	**April 20, 2004 - 9:00 AM** Social Hall, Sugar Regulatory Administration North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

All particulars relative to the Eligibility, Bid bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contracts shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and other applicable government rules and regulations.

The SRA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of the bids.

The SRA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein or accept any bid(s) or offer(s) which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) **JAMES C. LEDESMA**
Administrator

(PDI - April 3 & 11, 2004)

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JOB WORLD 2004 SEMINARS

April 2, 2004 (Friday)		April 3, 2004 (Saturday)	
11:00 to 11:45 AM	HOW CALL CENTERS HIRE PEOPLE Ms. Guia Bengzon, Operations Director, Call Center Academy	11:00 to 11:45 AM	ENGLISH AND CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING Ms. Guia Bengzon, Operations Director, Call Center Academy
2:00 to 2:45 PM	IMAGE ENHANCEMENT Ms. Aida Valles, President, ATV Speakers Network	2:00 to 2:45 PM	DO WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO AND GET PAID FOR IT Ms. Jean Lim, President, Powervision
4:00 to 4:45 PM	TIPS AND TECHNIQUES IN PASSING JOB INTERVIEWS Dr. Jose Mordeno, President, Speechpower	4:00 to 4:45 PM	ACQUIRING AMERICAN ACCENT Dr. Jose Mordeno, President, Speechpower

Organized by: NeoTrade
In cooperation with: JOB JOB
Sponsors: Call Center Academy, Speechpower, PowerVision, Mary Kay, DSL, Digital Filipino, Orobeho.com

For inquiries please contact
Neotrade Enterprises Tel: 812 9099 and 812 3973 Fax No: 812 7450 Email: neotrade1@yahoo.com
Website: www.neotrade.com.ph

DOT launches Island Caravan

THE Department of Tourism introduces groundbreaking travel packages through a series of weekend caravans in selected destinations in the country for this year's summer break aimed at increasing inter regional travel movement.

The first of these travel packages, the "Island Caravan: The Nautical Highway Adventure," consists of a five-day, four-night series of events to kick-off on March 26-30, 2004. Other similar runs are on April 17-21 and May 15-19, 2004. This is the first organized caravan to maximize the advantages of the Roll-on, Roll-off ferries (RO/RO) for tourism.

This summer's "Island Caravan" is a road trip with a twist. Participants will drive from Manila to Boracay using the Ro/Ro ferries, with stops in the most popular vacation spots like Puerto Galera, Calapan, and Boracay.

The travel packages for five days and four nights start at P6,000 per person for campsite, P7,600 for non-aircon rooms and P9,800 for aircon rooms. All packages include land and sea transportation, accommodations, meals as stated, and fun-filled activities at every stop. Registration fee is P1,000 for adults and P500 for students.

4th Kapihang Entrepinoy

DURING the 4th Kapihang Entrepinoy, a quarterly business forum organized by the Center for Small Entrepreneurs (CSE), DTI Undersecretary for International Trade Thomas Aquino advised that "should you have a business need that you feel the government should address, it's good if you belong to an association, so complains and needs, *padaanin nyo dun*. T14 15hat way it is written ... It's a way to communicate with your government."

The business forum themed "The future of Entrepreneurship in the Hands of Future Leaders" updated entrepreneurs on the impact of the country's political scenario to their small businesses, on globalization, on the programs on entrepreneurship by the different political parties and on CSE's plan to organize the micro entrepreneurs through the "Entrepreneurs for Others" program.

A publisher of several widely circulated monthly trade magazines, based in Quezon City, is looking for:

ADVERTISING SALESMAN

- Graduate of any 4-year course from a reputable college/university
- Wide/experienced preferred but not required
- Able to communicate well, both oral and written

Qualified applicants may send in their comprehensive bio-data with recent photo to:

P.O. Box 1295, Manila

or apply in person at:

626 G. Araneta Avenue,
Quezon City

PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
East Avenue, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) is inviting bidders for:

DESCRIPTION	Approved Budget	Bidding Fee
Supply of Laminated Reflective Glass	1.5 million	3,000.00

Source of Funding: **PHC FUNDS**

The list of eligibility requirements will be issued at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat, Purchasing Division, Basement of MAB, PHC, East Avenue, Quezon City. Only eligible bidders shall be required to pay the non-refundable bidding fee. The deadline for the submission of requirements is on **May 3, 2004** not later than 4:00 p.m. For any inquiry, please call Purchasing Divison at tel. no. 922-0574 ask for Ms. Noemi Nocasa.

The PHC reserves the right to reject any and all bids or declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract, if there is evidence of collusion between relevant public officers or employees of the PHC and any of the bidders, or among the bidders, or between bidders and third parties, including any act which restricts, suppresses or nullifies competition, or if the BAC is found to have failed to follow the prescribed bidding procedures. The agency also reserves the right to waive any formality on the bids received, provided that such waiver does not refer to a major deviation in a bid or any requirement provided for in the **Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)** of Republic Act No. 9184 pertaining to the substance of the bid. Should such review uncover any misrepresentation made in the eligibility statement, or any chages in the situation of the bidder materially downgrade the substance of such statements, the PHC shall disqualify the bidder upon due notice without any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by it in the preparation of its bids.

(Sgd.) **RAUL D. JARA, M.D.**
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - April 3, 4, 11 & 12, 2004)

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

United Print Media Group announces 2004 officers and directors

THE UNITED Print Media Group (UPMG), a merger of the publications composing the Print Media Organization (Primo), the Print Advertising Organization (Prado), and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, announces its new set of officers and directors for 2004 to serve as the forefront in building a strong alliance for the local print media industry.

Leading the roster of UPMG officers are Manila Bulletin's executive vice president for advertising Paciencia M. Pineda as its president and Pepito Olarte, vice president for advertising of the Philippine Daily Inquirer to serve as vice president. The other officers include Elaine Mapa, associate publisher of Belgosa Publishing (corporate secretary); Josie Tan Magtoto, general manager of Mr. & Ms. Publishing (treasurer); Ron Tamayo, advertising manager of Abante (auditor), and Lucien Dy Tioco, media director of the Philippine Star (PRO). Comprising the board of directors are Edwin Valera, advertising manager of Atlas Publishing; Tess Ramirez, advertising manager of Tower Publishing, and Charlie Arcega, advertising manager of Liwayway Publishing.

The UPMG has been active in representing the print sector in the Advertising Board of the Philippines (Adboard). Since its inception, UPMG has worked for the achievement of common beliefs and has been steadfast in its resolve to promote harmonious relationship among its members and with all the sectors in the advertising industry.

It has continued to work with its members towards a standardization of print media policies and regulations, more so in harmonizing and supervising print media activities in the advertising industry and ensure an internal check on its members in accordance to its print advertising Code of Rules.

The active participation of its members has resulted in the successful audio-visual presentation on print advertising during the Philippine Advertising Congress held in Baguio City last year. The UPMG is also involved in advocacy projects with its Literacy program through Teachers' Training in public schools in some of the depressed areas in the country, and book donations, to encourage reading awareness and reading skills.

UPMG conducted these activities in separate areas such as: San Jose, Antique last Sept. 14 and 15, 2002, M. Roxas elementary schools last Sept. 30 to Oct. 2, 2002, and in Davao City Schools held last Nov. 15 to 17, 2002. A series of teachers' training and book donations were also held last year in Silag Pakang Elementary School, Ilocos Norte (May 8, 2003), Consolation, Mandawe City, Cebu (July 18 to 20, 2003) and Palo, Leyte (Nov. 7 to 9, 2003). Many elementary English teachers benefited from the said teacher's training-seminar/workshop.

True to its objectives of raising the ethical standards and upgrade the quality of both its members' general and individual services, the association with funding assistance from Adboard, held late last year a seminar-workshop on Trends in Print Technology & Marketing Skills for its member publications free of charge.

With this new set of officers and directors, UPMG is set to embark on a more productive year of service to the print industry. The organization envisions more activities to increase skills, understanding and the bonding of its members and for more effectiveness in the advertising industry and more involvement in advocacy projects.

After all, these able men and women in the organization have taken upon themselves a far greater responsibility to meet the challenges of the times and be responsive enough towards uplifting the lives of the less fortunate citizens.

The UPMG members are: ABS-CBN Publishing (Rowena Dote); Atlas Publishing (Edwin Valera); Belgosa Publishing (Elaine Go-Mapa); Brown Madonna Publishing (Ricky Alegre); Business World (Hazel Gaston); Green Pastures Publishing (Bobby Vollarosa); Independent Daily (Bess Zamora); Kamahalan Publishing (Tonette Henson); Liwayway Publishing (Charlie Arcega) Malaya (Luz Bogaoisan); Manila Bulletin (Paciencia m. Pineda); Manila Times (Dante Ang); Monica Publishing (Ron Tamayo); Mr. & Mrs. Publishing (Josie Tan-Magtoto); Panay News (Danie mae Fajardo); Philippine Journalist (Antonio Angeles); Philippine Daily Inquirer (Pepito Olarte); Philippine Star (Joyce Uy); PSN (Bonnie Lachica); Tower Publishing (Tess Ramirez); WHC (Vickie Centeno); Woman Today (Medardo Moya).

President
Paciencia Pineda
Exec Vice President,
Manila Bulletin

Vice President
Pepito R. Olarte
Vice President,
Phil Daily Inquirer

Treasurer
Josie Tan Magtoto
General Manager,
Mr. & Ms. Publishing

Secretary
Elaine Go Mapa
Associate Publisher,
Belgosa Publishing

PRO
Lucien Dy Tioco
Media Director,
Philippine Star

Auditor
Ron Tamayo
Advertising Manager,
Monica Publishing

Director
Edwin Valera
Advertising Manager,
Atlas Publishing

Director
Charlie Arcega
Advertising Manager,
Liwayway Publishing

Director
Tess Ramirez
Advertising Manager,
Tower Publishing

Sentricon cited for environmental safety

AMIDST the growing need for highly efficient termite control, it is encouraging to know that there is one system that ensures safety not only for residential and commercial structures but the environment as well.

Sentricon Termite Colony Elimination System, manufactured by DowAgroSciences, was a proud recipient of the Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Award in recognition of its efforts in preserving the environment with its termite baiting technology.

Sentricon's unique form of extermination involves termite baits placed only when and where termites are present. Unlike the conventional liquid termiticide treatment where around 200 gallons of diluted chemicals are sprayed almost throughout infested or even non-infested areas, Sentricon uses minimal amount of an active ingredient called hexflumuron within its baits. So it leaves no residues in soil or even odor that when inhaled might be detrimental to the health of those within a busy household or office.

Here in the country where termite infestation is a never-ending problem, many are realizing the importance of a long-term solution. As more and more Filipinos are becoming conscious about protecting their homes or even business establishments from destructive termites, they are sure to find a reliable ally in Sentricon. It not only provides a highly efficient treatment and quality protection against termite infestation, it also keeps their natural surroundings safe and sound.

Truly Sentricon System is one termite control treatment to reckon with. Thus, gaining trust of homeowners and business owners throughout the country. To know more about Sentricon Termite Colony Elimination System, call 819-1986 and 815-9273 or visit www.sentricon.com.

Product FILES

Abstinent treats

Seafood Gourmet Pizzas
Shakey's

SHAKEY'S makes abstinence this Lenten Season a whole lot easier with its new Seafood Gourmet Pizzas, which come in three variants: The Tuna St. Louie, the Portuguese Sardines, and the long-time favorite Friday Special Pizzas. The Tuna St. Louie Pizza has a bed of creamy St. Louie dressing and rich mozzarella cheese topped with healthy tuna, delicious mushrooms, onions, and fresh parsley while the Portuguese Sardines Pizza comes with mildly spiced Portuguese Sardine strips in flavorful olive oil with rich and creamy mozzarella sprinkled with Feta cheese and topped with freshly picked tomatoes. Finally, the long-time favorite Friday Special Pizza is loaded with the Shakey's signature pizza sauce and cheese topped with lots of shrimps, anchovies, and mushrooms. With these Lenten treats, one will wish to be meat-abstinent everyday. Shakey's restaurants are open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Sunday. For those who would rather stay in than eat out, a Shakey's meal is just a phone call away with Shakey's Dial-A-Pizza 533-8000, visit the website at www.shakeyspizza.ph

Wendy's Lenten Shrimp Sandwich

Shrimp Sandwich

ENJOY the goodness of real shrimp in a delicious breaded patty this Lenten season. Topped with rich tartar sauce and crisp lettuce on a warm kaiser bun. always perfectly seasoned, always served fresh the moment you order. Only at Wendy's... For a limited time.

Bits Clips

Bartending course

PINOYTENDER offers a course on Comprehensive Bartending for only P5,000. For inquiries, e-mail pinoytender@hotmail.com or text/call 09183878199 or call 9339084. Classes start April 12, enroll now.

Arts and crafts Easter fun

SM SUPERMALLS, Nestle and Faber-Castell celebrate Easter by offering free arts and crafts activities for both parents and their children. The arts and crafts activities will be held simultaneously from April 5 to 11 in ten branches of SM Supermalls: SM City North Edsa, SM Megamall, SM Fairview, SM Sta. Mesa, SM Manila, SM Sucat, SM Southmall, SM Bicutan, SM Bacoor and SM Marilao. The activities are as follows: Hard-boiled Egg painting - April 5 to 7 and April 10 and 11 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; "Funny Bunny" Paper Tearing Art and Easter Mobile Cut Out Art - April 5 to 7 and April 10 to 11 from 1 to 3 p.m.; My Bunnies and Me Coloring and Animal Farm Modeling Clay - April 5 to 11 from 3 to 5 p.m. For more information, call Faber-Castell at 361-7391 to 92.

Quaresma en Intramuros

A UNIQUE portrayal of the New Way of the Cross will be part of the Holy Week celebration in Intramuros. Several Intramuros institutions such as barangays, schools, business establishments, San Agustin Church and the Archbishop, under the aegis of the Friends of Intramuros Foundation, have arranged distinctive Stations of the Cross in the picnic area of Fort Santiago. The public is encouraged to make the stations at their own pace anytime during the Holy Week. For further details call the Friends of Intramuros Foundation office at 527-2113/853-6438 between 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. except on Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

Basic Landscaping workshop

GREEN 2000 Garden Center, the country's premier one-stop-landscaping shop, and Landscape Unlimited present landscape designer Francis Gener in a lecture/demonstration on "Basic Landscaping: Coloring Your Garden with Flowers and Foliages" on April 10, from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Manila Seedling Bank Environment Center, corner Quezon Avenue and Edsa, Quezon City. Lecture fee is P200 for Green 2000 Garden Center members only. For more details, call 434-2347 or 732-1954.

Basic photo course

A BASIC photography course offered by the Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation will start April 11. The venue is FPPF Art Chamber inside Fort Santiago in Intramuros, Manila. The 4-Sunday basic photo workshop covers practical tips and techniques for better picture taking, knowledge in composition, use of flash, filters, portrait lighting, posing basic and practice shoot. Those who finished the basic course can take the advanced course which is ideal for those who want to become a professional or go into business. Contact FPPF c/o Vincent Guillermo or Lerma Aquino at 813-7420 or 843-5341.

Superbrands

CHINATRUST PHILIPPINES CITED AS A SUPERBRAND

Chinatrust (Phils) was honored as a Superbrand in awarding ceremonies held by Superbrands International last Dec. 3, 2003 at The Peninsula Manila. The rigid criteria for selection included market dominance, goodwill, customer loyalty, longevity, and overall market acceptancy. Shown in photo (from left) are Peter Jeffrey, CEO for Superbrands International, Chinatrust first vice president for the marketing group Gerry Munda, Chinatrust AVP for marketing services Cathy Alonso, and Karl McLean, Superbrands International GM-Philippines

INQUIRER HOSTS LUNCHEON FOR MEAD JOHNSON

The Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) welcomes Mead Johnson at a luncheon held recently at the PDI Boardroom. In photo are (seated, from left) PDI publisher Isagani Yambot, PDI president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Mead Johnson president Kasper Jakobsen, Mead Johnson corporate affairs manager JV Salamat, (standing, from left) PDI business features editor Marge Espino, PDI SVP for corporate services Dave Valdes, PDI VP for marketing Donald Lim, PDI SVP for sales and marketing Rene Reinoso, PDI chief financial officer Luis Ymson, PDI AVP for strategic communications Celine Madamba and Mead Johnson customer service officer Virlynn Magante.

MEDOCARE FOR LRTA EMPLOYEES

Medocare Health Systems Inc. recently signed a healthcare service agreement with Light Rail Transit Authority Employees Association to provide the latter's member-employees and their dependents a comprehensive healthcare program. Shown signing the contract of healthcare coverage at the Heritage Hotel Manila are engineer Rodrigo Bulario (second from left), president of the LRTA Employees Association and Col. Esteban Balingit Uy Jr. (third from left), chair and CEO of Medocare Health Systems Inc. Witnessing the signing are lawyer Zosimo Mendoza (extreme right), OIC - administrator of LRTA and Gerry Zapanta (extreme left), EVP and COO of Medocare.

DOH SUPPORTS PEDIATRICA'S DEFEAT TB CAMPAIGN

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit (right) officially makes known his commitment to fighting childhood tuberculosis in the country to Carlos Ejercito, chief operating officer of United Laboratories Inc, during the launching of Pediatrica Inc's Defeat TB campaign held in Makati. The event marked Pediatrica and DOH jointly extending valued efforts in educating Filipino parents on childhood tuberculosis by making them more vigilant in prevention as well as their choices of treatment and cure.

PALSCON INDUCTS OFFICERS

Shown is the induction of officers for 2004 of the Philippine Association of Local Service Contractors (Palscon) at Metroclub, Makati City with Dr. Edward Ong, inducting (in coat and tie); (from left) Ben Siron, lawyer Joe Alberto, Fermin Cunanan, Evelyn Arreo, Linda Dichoson, Loida Bautista, Linda Ang and Nelia Castro, directors

We've added another dignified service to keep the memory of your departed loved ones.

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OBITUARIES

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FORT BONIFACIO
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig
(632) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 109/112
Sales@heritagepark.com.ph
Mortuary and Crematory opening soon!

THE FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR DEARLY BELOVED

CARMEN TANJUAKIO MENDOZA

(December 2, 1926 – April 4, 2003)

Holy Masses for her eternal peace and happiness will be offered on April 4, 2004 at the following churches:

St. James The Great Parish, *Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City*	8:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
St. Jerome Emiliani and St. Susana Parish *Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City*	8:30 a.m.
Jesus the Divine Healer Parish *Tahanan Village, Parañaque City*	6:00 p.m.
St. John Bosco Parish *Arnaiz St., Makati City*	6:00 p.m.
Santuario de San Antonio *McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City*	6:15 a.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish *N. Garcia St., Bel Air II, Makati City*	6:00 a.m.
Parish of National Shrine of the Sacred Heart *Dao St., San Antonio Village, Makati City*	6:00 a.m.

We, her children: Ed, Thelma, Volet, Yoly & Gener; in-laws, grandchildren & great grandchildren invite relatives and friends to pray for her eternal happiness with the Lord.

Mary Jacqueline Guan-Nim (Malyne)

Went home to the Father
at 12:25am on 01 April 2004

Her bereaved husband, Arli, daughters Bea and Gioia, mother Baba, sisters Maliz, Jojo, & Maricon, brothers Melky & Leo, in-laws Ferdie & Dang and the Focolare Movement request the reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains are in Chapel 1-A, Nacional Memorial Homes, Araneta Avenue, Q.C.

The Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on Tuesday, 6 April 2004 at 11:00.

Cremation will follow at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Q.C. at 1:00 p.m.

'...and she believed in love'

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Forester DOMINADOR M. FAUSTINO, JR.

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 12, 2004

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

Augusto Mata Mendoza

Passed away on April 1, 2004

He is survived by his wife **Bernadette Suzara**; children and children-in-law **Nonoy & Jiji, Mario & Fe, Myra, & Chris, Augie & Pichi**; and grandchildren **Jana, Daniela, Kristela, Andrea, Julia, Alexandra, Abi, Andy** and **Patricia.**

His cremains lie in state at Hope Chapel, Don Bosco Church, Pasay Road, Makati City until April 4, 2004.

Services will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 4, 2004 at the Hope Chapel.

DR. ANICIA DEL ROSARIO VILLENA

Plaridel, Bulacan

Passed away last April 1, 2004 at the age of 91 and now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of our Lord.

Her husband **Godofredo Sr. M.D.** (†); children **Jun & Lourdes, Nestor & Cindy, Filemon & Let, Lamberto & Gene, Maryann**; grandchildren **Peewee, Maryse, JR, Kimmy, Kristine, Lianne, Jeje, Audette, Jinjin, Brian**; great grandchildren **MILES, Tintin**; sisters & brothers, relatives and friends request the pious readers to remember her and pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the family residence at Poblacion, Plaridel, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 4, 2004 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Plaridel, Bulacan, St. James Catholic Church.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
and bank-to-bank payments

MARCOSA RODRIGUEZ BUSUEGO, M.D.

of Malabon, Metro Manila and Sydney, Australia
July 4, 1919 – March 27, 2004
UP Medicine Class 1943

Her husband, Amb. Romeo S. Busuego, Sr.; children Romeo Jr. & Carina Llamas and Dr. Ma. Theresa & Dr. Ken Ho; grandchildren Nonie & Jill, Meg, Matthew, Michael, Isabelle and Timothy; great grandchildren Miguel and Gabriel and other relatives request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Interment will be held on Sunday, April 11, 2004 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Parañaque, following the 2 p.m. Holy Mass at the Los Desposorio Chapel, 132 Panay Ave., South Triangle, Quezon City.

26th Death Anniversary

of the
LATE

ESPERANZA LIMJAP VDA. DE OSMEÑA

(1896-1978)

Masses will be offered at the following Churches on 04 April 2004:

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St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Church Bel-Air Village, Makati City	6:30 p.m.
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Bangkal, Makati City	6:15 p.m.
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Barasoain, Malolos City	6:00 a.m.
Basilica Minore of the Immaculate Concepcion Parish, Malolos City	6:00 a.m.
Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag Parish Manaoag, Pangasinan	6:00 a.m.
Redemptorist Church Cebu City	6:00 a.m.
Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral Cebu City	6:30 a.m.
Basilica del Sto. Niño Magallanes Street, Cebu City	8:30 a.m.
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish Cebu City	5:30 p.m.
St. Therese Parish Lahug, Cebu City	5:30 p.m.
San Roque Parish Church Wireless Mandaue City	6:00 p.m.
Sto. Rosario Parish P. del Rosario St., Cebu City	7:00 p.m.

Readers are requested to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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Tels 715-1025, 715-1031, 715-1027
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San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
Tels 747-8599, 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
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Tels. (0785) 522-3451, 522-2128, (0917) 434-9976
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City
Tel 732-0309, 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch A S Fortuna Street, Banilad,
Mandaue City, Cebu;
Tels 346-2543 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills Lahug, Cebu City. Tels 231-0721, 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor J. Abad Santos, Davao City;
Tels (082) 227-1201, 227-1258
DAYAO FUNERAL HOME
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DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
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M. Almeda St., Pateros, Metro Manila;
Tels 642-3010, 633-3602
FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
187 Real St., Zapote Alabang, Las Piñas;
Tels 873-0507, 873-0024
FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City;
Tels 890-3556, 899-8191
FUNERARIA TUASON
Poblacion, San Miguel, Bulacan 3011;
Tels. (044) 764-0281; 678-0266; (0917) 895-0603
FUNERARIA SAMSON
145 Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite;
Tels (046) 471-3375, 471-2675
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Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila;
Tels 642-6181 to 82
HERITAGE PARK
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tels. (DL) 845-2341 to 42. (TL) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 110/112
HOLY GARDENS MEMORIAL PARK
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Quezon Ave., Angono, Rizal
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HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Rd., Sucat, Parañaque City;
Tels 825-1296; 825-1291, Telefax: 825-1314
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143 G. Araneta Ave. cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City
Tels. 749-3806 to 11; 712-3001, 743-6502 or 05
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Dr A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque;
Tels. 820-1592, 825-9947; 825-8635
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79 Naguilian Rd., Baguio City;
Tel. (074) 443-3337; (074) 442-3117
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EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City;
Tels 895-1011 to 19
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Loyola Memorial Park, A. Bonifacio Avenue,
Tañong, Marikina City
Tels. 941-3196 to 98, 941-3676; Telefax 941-3577
MARIAN MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Marcos Hiway, Antipolo, Rizal,
Tels 645-1855, 682-0209, 682-0210
MARCELO FUNERAL HOMES
Tels. 283-1613, 273-8922
MT. SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL
Arellano St., Dagupan City
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NACIONAL MEMORIAL HOMES
264 G Araneta Avenue, Quezon City;
Tels 713-5231 to 35, 714-0867, 714-0868
OUR LADY OF PEACE MEMORIAL PARK CHAPEL & SERVICES, INC.
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Tel. No 697-0782, 697-0026, 650-7426, Fax 697-2764
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13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City,
Tels 646-1725, 646-1730
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Tel Nos 254-0867, 254-0839
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ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Ground Flr Rolling Hills Chapel, 27th-Lacson St.,
Mandalagan, Bacolod City; Tel 433-7132
RIZAL FUNERAL HOMES
438 Cementina St., Pasay City;
Tels. 831-1204
Sucat Branch: 8187 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat,
Parañaque City
Tels 826-1376, 826-9682, (0915) 712-1220
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City;
Tel Nos 843-8838/30, Fax No 843-9223
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City,
Telefax 724-4139, 725-2044
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City,
Tels 852-8228, 852-7284
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16-15 G Tuazon cor Loreto St., Sampaloc,
Manila. Tels 749-3679, 781-1772
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Tels 372-5084, 410-9286/87
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Tels 831-3797, 844-7846 843-1801, 845-4836
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1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila. Tel 302-5447
ZUASOLA FUNERAL HOMES
Brgy Del Remedio San Pablo City, Laguna
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> **"For God so loved the world, that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have Everlasting life."**
>
> — John 3:16

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SATURDAY,
APRIL 3, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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'...and she believed in love'

Augusto Mata Mendoza

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He is survived by his wife **Bernadette Suzara**; children and children-in-law **Nonoy & Jiji**, **Mario & Fe**, **Myra, & Chris**, **Augie & Pichi**; and grandchildren **Jana**, **Daniela**, **Kristela**, **Andrea**, **Julia**, **Alexandra**, **Abi**, **Andy** and **Patricia**.

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MARCOSA RODRIGUEZ BUSUEGO, M.D.

of Malabon, Metro Manila and Sydney, Australia
July 4, 1919 – March 27, 2004
UP Medicine Class 1943

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Redemptorist Church Cebu City	6:00 a.m.
Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral Cebu City	6:30 a.m.
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Tels 747-8599, 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
243 A B. Fernandez Ave., Dagupan City, Pangasinan
Tels (0785) 522-3451, 522-2128, (0917) 434-9976
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G Araneta Ave., Quezon City
Tel 732-0309, 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch A S Fortuna Street, Banilad,
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— John 3:16

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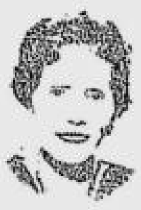

THE FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF
OUR DEARLY BELOVED

CARMEN TANJUAKIO MENDOZA

(December 2, 1926 – April 4, 2003)

Holy Masses for her eternal peace and happiness will be offered on April 4, 2004 at the following churches:

St. James The Great Parish. *Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City*	8:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
St. Jerome Emiliani and St. Susana Parish *Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City*	8:30 a.m.
Jesus the Divine Healer Parish *Tahanan Village, Parañaque City*	6:00 p.m.
St. John Bosco Parish *Arnaiz St. Makati City*	6:00 p.m.
Santuario de San Antonio *McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City*	6:15 a.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish *[illegible] Garcia St. Bel Air II Makati City*	6:00 a.m.
Parish of National Shrine of the Sacred Heart *[illegible] St. San Antonio Village Makati City*	6:00 a.m.

We, her children Ed, Thelma, Volet, Yoly & Gener; in-laws, grandchildren & great grandchildren invite relatives and friends to pray for her eternal happiness with the Lord.

Augusto Mata Mendoza

Passed away on April 1, 2004

He is survived by his wife **Bernadette Suzara**; children and children-in-law **Nonoy & Jiji**, **Mario & Fe**, **Myra**, **& Chris**, **Augie & Pichi**; and grandchildren **Jana**, **Daniela**, **Kristela**, **Andrea**, **Julia**, **Alexandra**, **Abi**, **Andy** and **Patricia**.

His cremains lie in state at Hope Chapel, Don Bosco Church, Pasay Road, Makati City until April 4, 2004.

Services will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 4, 2004 at the Hope Chapel.

DR. ANICIA DEL ROSARIO VILLENA

Plaridel, Bulacan

Passed away last April 1, 2004 at the age of 91
and now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of our Lord.

Her husband **Godofredo Sr. M.D.** (+); children **Jun & Lourdes**, **Nestor & Cindy**, **Filemon & Let**, **Lamberto & Gene**, **Maryann**; grandchildren **Peewee**, **Maryse**, **JR**, **Kimmy**, **Kristine**, **Lianne**, **Jeje**, **Audette**, **Jinjin**, **Brian**; great grandchildren **MILES**, **Tintin**; sisters & brothers, relatives and friends request the pious readers to remember her and pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the family residence at Poblacion, Plaridel, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 4, 2004 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Plaridel, Bulacan, St. James Catholic Church

---

Mary Jacqueline Guan-Nim (Malyne)

Went home to the Father
at 12:25am on 01 April 2004

Her bereaved husband, Arli, daughters Bea and Gioia, mother Baba, sisters Maliz, Jojo, & Maricon, brothers Melky & Leo, in-laws Ferdie & Dang and the Focolare Movement request the reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains are in Chapel 1-A, Nacional Memorial Homes, Araneta Avenue, Q.C.

The Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on Tuesday, 6 April 2004 at 11:00.

Cremation will follow at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Q.C. at 1:00 p.m.

"...and she believed in love"

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❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Forester DOMINADOR M. FAUSTINO, JR.

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 12, 2004

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

MARCOSA RODRIGUEZ BUSUEGO, M.D.

of Malabon, Metro Manila and Sydney, Australia
July 4, 1919 – March 27, 2004
UP Medicine Class 1943

Her husband, Amb. Romeo S. Busuego, Sr.; children Romeo Jr. & Carina Llamas and Dr. Ma. Theresa & Dr. Ken Ho; grandchildren Nonie & Jill, Meg, Matthew, Michael, Isabelle and Timothy; great grandchildren Miguel and Gabriel and other relatives request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Interment will be held on Sunday, April 11, 2004 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Parañaque, following the 2 p.m. Holy Mass at the Los Desposorio Chapel, 132 Panay Ave., South Triangle, Quezon City.

26th Death Anniversary

of the
LATE

ESPERANZA LIMJAP VDA. DE OSMEÑA

(1896-1978)

Masses will be offered at the following Churches on 04 April 2004:

St. John Bosco Parish Church Pasay Road, Makati City	6:30 a.m.
Santuario de San Antonio Parish Forbes Park Makati City	7:30 a.m
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Church Bel-Air Village, Makati City	6.30 p.m
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Bangkal, Makati City	6:15 p.m
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Barasoain Malolos City	6:00 a.m.
Basilica Minore of the Immaculate Concepcion Parish Malolos City	6:00 a.m
Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag Parish Manaoag, Pangasinan	6:00 a.m
Redemptorist Church Cebu City	6:00 a.m
Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral Cebu City	6:30 a.m
Basilica del Sto. Niño Magallanes Street Cebu City	8:30 a.m
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish Cebu City	5:30 p.m
St. Therese Parish Lahug, Cebu City	5:30 p.m
San Roque Parish Church Wireless Mandaue City	6:00 p.m
Sto. Rosario Parish P. del Rosario St., Cebu City	7:00 p.m

Readers are requested to pray
for the eternal repose of her soul

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John 3:16

SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang
Assistant Editor Stella O. Gonzales

Road safety, a public health concern

By Charles E. Buban

BRIDGET Driscoll was a 44-year-old mother who had come to London to watch a dancing display. While walking in the grounds of the theme park Crystal Palace, she was hit by a speeding car and died minutes later from head injuries.

It was Aug. 17, 1896, and Driscoll became the first road fatality in the world.

The coroner deemed her death accidental and trusted that "this sort of nonsense will never happen again."

Unfortunately, it was not so.

Today, more than a century after Driscoll's death, some 1.2 million people are still being killed on roads every year and up to 50 million more are injured.

3,000 deaths each day

Says World Health Organization director general Dr. Lee Jong-wook: "Every day as many as 140,000 people are injured on the world's roads. More than 3,000 die and some 15,000 are disabled for life."

Lee laments that many countries put far less effort into understanding and preventing road traffic injuries despite the fact that its annual costs can amount to $65 billion (about P3.6 trillion) in many countries like Philippines.

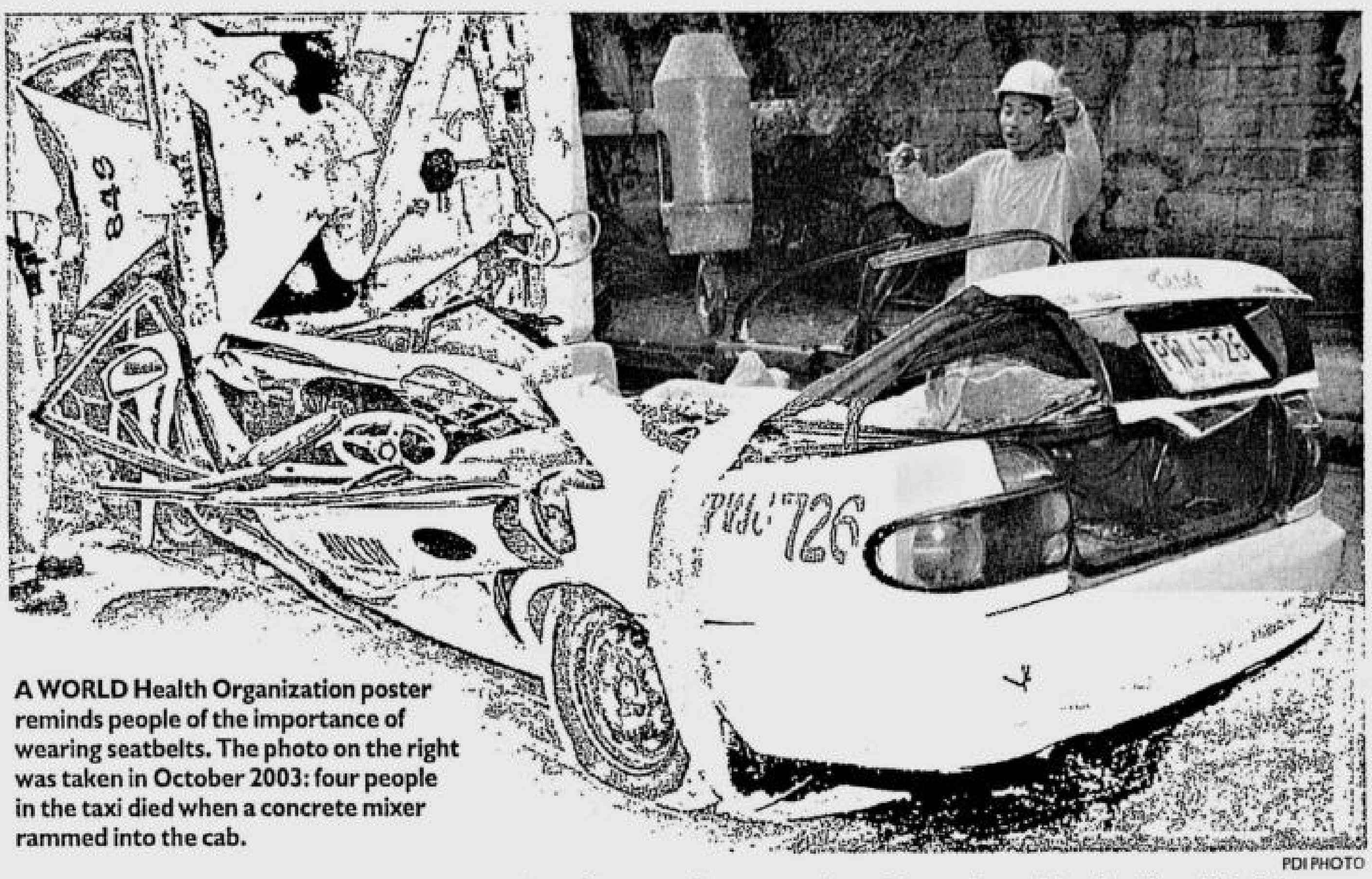
For these reasons, WHO dedicated this year's celebration of World Health Day (April 7) to road safety and has chosen the slogan "Road Safety Is No Accident."

Averting the trend

Is it inevitable that as more and more people use motorized transport, so will road casualties increase?

Lee warns that if current trends continue, the number of people killed and injured on the world's roads will rise by more than 60 percent between 2000 and 2020.

ROAD SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT



A WORLD Health Organization poster reminds people of the importance of wearing seatbelts. The photo on the right was taken in October 2003: four people in the taxi died when a concrete mixer rammed into the cab.

PDI PHOTO

But WHO stresses that such trend can be averted.

"The countries most successful at reducing harm have engaged many different groups from government, civil society and industry in coordinated programs of road safety research, development and implementation," says Lee.

In fact, he notes that the most heavily motorized countries in the world have some of the lowest rates of road traffic death per 100,000 people, with annual rates below 6 and falling. (It's 5.4 in the United Kingdom.)

Compare this to the global rate, which stood at a high 19 deaths per 100,000 people last year.

Lee says road accidents can be prevented, "if they are recognized as a serious public health problem and if governments and others take the necessary actions to prevent them."

Mostly in developing countries

WHO notes that the most number of injuries occur in low- and middle-income countries.

Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean region have one of the highest rates averaging 28.3 and 26.3 per 100,000 people, respectively.

WHO notes that unlike those in high-income countries where cars make up the largest portion of road traffic, these countries have more pedestrians, riders of bicycles, motorcycles and mopeds, and users of public transport vehicles.

In most of these vehicles, passengers remain standing or are seated on decks which were not designed with their safety in mind.

Key interventions

To attain safer roads and minimize related injuries, WHO presents five key areas that must be addressed:

- Speeding contributes to at least 30 percent of road traffic crashes and deaths. According to WHO, for every 1 kph increase in speed, there is a 3-percent increase in the incidence of injury crashes and a 5-percent increase in the risk of a fatal crash. Setting and enforcing speed limits, installation of speed cameras and speed bumps are some of the suggested solutions.
- Alcohol of any level in the blood increases the risk of crashes. Random breath-testing and tough and swift penalties for offenders are suggested.
- Use of seatbelts reduces fatal or serious injury by 40 percent to 65 percent. Its usage has saved more lives than any other road safety intervention.
- Helmet-wearing should be enforced as standards for motorcycles and even bicycle riders. This is because head trauma is the main cause of death and disability in drivers of motorized two-wheelers and among children, bicycle injuries are the leading cause of injury.
- Visibility, or the ability to see and be seen, is another important issue. Motorized vehicles using daytime running lights have a crash rate 10 percent to 15 percent lower than those that do not. One-third of people hit on the road reported that they had difficulty seeing the vehicle, and almost half of drivers say that they have difficulty seeing the pedestrian. Daytime running lights for two-wheelers and cars, reflectors on vehicles and reflective clothing for people and improving street lighting are suggested.

A puzzle to solve

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

CALLING all puzzle lovers. Tonton Alcantara of Mensa Philippines [tonalcantara@yahoo.com] sent this puzzle a few months back. He writes:

Junique, a guy from Mindanao, sent this. He said no one has solved his puzzle so far. Here is the puzzle:

1 - 2 / 3 / 4 - 5 / 6 - 7 + 8 * 9 = 100

Fill in the missing pairs of parentheses to make the equation total exactly 100. Mathematical rules apply wherein innermost groups are evaluated first and multiplication/division (*, /) takes precedence over addition/subtraction (+, -). The numbers and signs are already in their proper sequence.

The puzzle seems simple, but what makes it challenging is that we do not know how many pairs of parenthesis are missing. It is guaranteed that the only correct solution, when inputted as is into MS Excel, would total exactly 100.

I have faith in you, readers. Send me your solutions through e-mail at blessbook@yahoo.com or speed mail at Ateneo de Manila University, Mathematics Department, Loyola Heights, Quezon City. The first three readers to send the correct solution will receive an autographed copy of my book "Are Scientists Atheists? Some Fast Facts About Life" (Anvil Publishing. 2003).

Struggling with math

Ding Villanueva [radvill@hotmail.com], a concerned parent, has this request:

My teenage daughter is struggling with her math. I learned from some friends that you have an entire selection of math books that may help my daughter with the very basic up to the kind of math she will be encountering in college. Please provide me with your recommended math books that you yourself authored and where I could buy them. I am sure these will augment my kid's math learning. I realize that I should have written you much earlier, but maybe it is not yet too late to seek your help. Thank you very much, and best personal regards.

It is never too late to learn math. Your daughter is only in first year college. She will be using math in some way throughout her four years there, and also when she finally gets a job. I have coauthored and coedited textbook series and workbooks for elementary, high school and college math, but I don't think all are appropriate for her.

If she needs to brush up on very elementary math, then get Grade 8 of "New Math for Today" (adapted from the US Silver Burdett Ginn edition, published by Anvil locally). It should be available in bookstores. Or call Anvil Publishing sales at 637-3621 or 637-5141 to order a copy (ask for Lorie or Bong) or e-mail at anvilsales@eudoramail.com.

For high school, I think Schaum's Outline Series in Algebra should suffice. I hope Goodwill Bookstore still has copies.

Believe it or not, I have leafed through the "Dummies" and "Idiots" series and have found their math explanations pretty good. You can try those, too.

But what may be more important is that your daughter develops a positive attitude toward math. Why is she struggling with the subject? Bad teachers? Not enough practice? Math anxiety? Get a copy of my book "Eureka! Thoughts on Math" (available from Anvil). Read and discuss together. With your help, I am sure your daughter will do better in math. Good luck!

Teaching statistics

Jhona Alim [jaypay2003@yahoo.com] teaches down south.

Shalom! I am an avid reader of your columns in the INQUIRER/INQ7. I love your columns and your books (I bought two of your books). I am assigned to teach high school statistics (an elective in our school) this coming school year. This is my first time to teach this subject. Can you recommend books which I can use as references? Thanks a lot. God bless!

Thank you for your support. I am thrilled to know you were able to get hold of my books over there. Statistics is fun to teach and learn, you should have a blast! A good reference book is "An Introduction to Statistics" by Ronald Walpole (any edition), which may be locally printed and distributed.

Or try "Statistics for Dummies." What's great about this book is the many real-life applications, which your students will clamor for, even if the theory is not as well-developed. I don't think Schaum's "Outline Series in Statistics" is still in stock, but perhaps you can order one online at Amazon. Enjoy, and God bless you, too!

E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Hair today, here tomorrow

DISCOVER

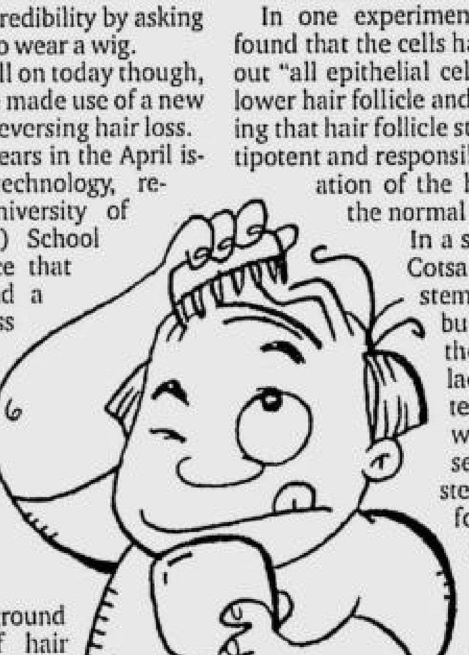
Massie Santos Ballon

(Conclusion)

A FEW WEEKS ago I came across an article on how cool it was that 40 years after the first "Star Trek" series debuted on TV, the tricorders and communicators Captain Kirk and his shipmates used have become standard parts of our lives as cell phones and PDA organizers. But one does have to question (as Mad magazine did some years back) just how technologically advanced the Star Trek universe was, if you will recall Captain Picard's receding hairline on "Star Trek: The Next Generation." Maybe the show's writers didn't want to ruin Picard's credibility by asking actor Patrick Stewart to wear a wig.

If the show were still on today though, the writers could have made use of a new study about possibly reversing hair loss.

In a paper that appears in the April issue of Nature Biotechnology, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) School of Medicine announce that they may have found a way to treat hair loss using stem cells. The researchers were led by Dr. George Cotsarelis, an assistant professor of dermatology and director of UPenn's Hair and Scalp Clinic.



Hair cycle

First a little background into the science of hair growth. As Cotsarelis et al. explain, at the base of the hair follicle is an area called the bulb which teems with proliferating cells, from which grows the hair. When the bulb cells die, the hair follicle goes into a hibernation period known as telogen phase during which the lower follicle regenerates itself so a new hair can grow and the cycle can start all over again.

Dr. Cotsarelis believes that any change in the hair growth cycle causes hair loss, and that the cycle is controlled by the stem cells in the hair follicle.

Several years ago, Dr. Cotsarelis found epithelial (skin) stem cells at the base of the hair follicle in an area known as the bulge. In this new paper, the researchers claim that the epithelial stem cells behave more like embryonic stem cells rather than adult stem cells in that they have the ability to transform into all cell types involved in hair growth.

Adult stem cells, however, are pluripotent, which means they can turn into some cell types. To prove this, Cotsarelis et al. designed a marker system using a protein called keratin1-15 (Krt1-15 or K15) to track and identify the epithelial stem cells as they migrated from the bulge and divided.

Glowing cells

They used transgenic mice and a technique called fluorescence-activated cell sorting (FACS) to identify the epithelial stem cells. Under the microscope, cells that glowed in various neon colors had been tagged by the K15 marker.

In one experiment, the researchers found that the cells had moved throughout "all epithelial cell types of the new lower hair follicle and hair shaft, indicating that hair follicle stem cells...are multipotent and responsible for the regeneration of the hair follicle during the normal [growth] cycle."

In a second experiment, Cotsarelis et al. took stem cells from the bulge and placed them in mice that lacked immune systems. After four weeks, the researchers found that stem cells migrated to form hair follicles, and also skin and sweat glands.

To quote the paper: "This suggests that the bulge cells possess a relatively undifferentiated neonatal-like phenotype." In plain English, the bulge cells are acting like embryonic stem cells, which is strange because embryonic stem cells are found only in embryos, which is why stem cell research using such material is controversial.

Controlling hair growth cycle

Researchers are now trying to understand the biochemical pathways involved, in the hope of understanding and maybe eventually controlling the hair growth cycle. There may yet come a day when people won't have to comb their hair over the bald spots or resort to ill-fitting wigs.

But even more exciting than ending hair loss is the news that the bulge cells can become anything, including skin. Because the hair follicle constantly regenerates, Cotsarelis et al. are also planning to learn how to speed up the healing process for open wounds such as sores, and even how to help burn victims regain a more normal appearance using their own skin.

If "Star Trek: The Next Generation" were still on today, Captain Picard might have had his handsome bald head covered in his own hair.

Pfizer promotes workplace wellness at Inquirer

STRESS is a fundamental part of working life. The physical, mental and emotional strain that may come with an individual's workload can place a toll on his health and well-being. Statistics show that the number of work-related stresses has increased over the years.

Although it is essential that people experience challenges within their working lives, it is also important to realize that anything in excess could eventually become harmful and loses its beneficial effect. In the case of the media industry, in particular, where everything is unpredictable and no one is exempt from meeting deadlines, people tend to add on to this strain by trying to find cathartic practices such as smoking and drinking.

It is therefore of no surprise that more and more organizations today recognize the significance of a healthy workforce. Although steps have essentially been taken to ensure that employees have access to proper healthcare, still more people tend to spend much of their time in the office and leading sedentary lifestyles.

Healthy workforce

With this in mind, Pfizer Inc. developed the Workplace Wellness Program. Launched in 2002, the program is aimed at promoting a healthy working populace. Not only does it aim to enhance the health and well-being of employees, but it also hopes to create a venue where valuable health information can be disseminated and issues on health and wellness can be discussed. The program has been implemented in private corporations, schools, government institutions and media organizations.

Free medical tests

Organized by Pfizer's Disease Management Team, the Workplace Wellness Program was conducted yesterday at the INQUIRER where employees were able to avail of medical examinations and consultations for free.

Among the free medical tests offered were body mass index, blood pressure, total cholesterol, blood sugar and ECG screening as well as diagnostic tests and consultation on stress, erectile dysfunction, sleep disorders and depression.

"When stress is recognized and responded to appropriately, then employees will have a solid defense against claims for work-related stress," said Pfizer corporate affairs director Karen Villanueva.

Reconciling faith and science

PHOTOILLUSTRATION L A RIBA

By Lynett A. Villariba

CAN SPIRITUALITY thrive in an age of reason? After trying to rid itself of mysticism for the last century, empirical science is starting to look at the connection to the realm of the spirit that leads to God.

Many Eastern mystical traditions have long come to the conclusion that the mind and body, and the spirit as well, make up one reality.

In the realm of the physical, doctors and psychiatrists have tended to dismiss that view, but the more they learn about the inner workings of the mind, the more they realize that in this regard at least, the mystics are right and Descartes was wrong.

Brains of contemplatives

Today's scientists are going in the direction of confirming the connection by taking its picture—in vivid color.

Mapping the brains of meditating Tibetan Buddhists and Franciscan nuns engaged in deep, contemplative prayer in the 1990s, a radiologist and a psychiatrist captured snapshots of the brain nearing a state of mystical transcendence—what nuns refer to as "mystical union" and Buddhists as "interconnectedness."

During these moments, the blood flow indicating neural activity in the region where we draw the line between the self and the world was dramatically reduced. The study showed that the "higher reality"—described by mystics as a sense of limitless awareness melting into infinite space—is as real as brain imaging technology can show.

The Newberg and D'Aquili research proved that "religious highs" were founded not in emotion or wishful thinking, but in the genetically arranged wiring of the brain.

God is not just a perception generated by the brain. The brain has been wired to experience the reality of God.

Where is heaven?

That is as far as science can go in establishing the link between the material and spiritual realities. For all its amazing discoveries, science has not really established the location of the "kingdom of heaven"—or of God—mystics speak of.

Medical scientists have at least narrowed it down to the psychic space inside the brain, confirming what mystics have been saying all along: the "kingdom of heaven" is within the body, a macrocosm within the microcosm.

Faith and healing

Psychologists and neurologists agree that thoughts and emotions that color our reality are the results of complex electrochemical interactions within and between nerve cells.

Scientists have learned that not only is the mind like the rest of the body, but the well-being of one is intimately intertwined with that of the other. Mind and body share the same systems: nervous, circulatory, endocrine and immune.

What happens in the pancreas or liver can directly affect brain function. Disorders of the brain, conversely, can send out biochemical shock waves that disturb the rest of the body.

Medical science is starting to seriously look at what benefits patients may derive from spirituality, and they are finding more evidence that religious faith has some direct influence on physiology and health.

In his best-selling book, "The Relaxation Response" (1975), Harvard's Herbert Benson said patients could successfully battle a number of stress-related ills by practicing a simple form of meditation. With meditation, heart rate, respiration and brain waves slow down, muscles relax and the effects of epinephrine and other stress-related hormones diminish.

In his later book, "Timeless Healing," Benson ventured to say that humans were actually engineered for religious faith, based on his five-year work with patients where he found that those who claimed to feel the intimate presence of a higher power had better health and more rapid recoveries.

Local case histories handled by Dr. Omar Arabia in his 20-year integrative medicine practice demonstrate that stress hormones also have a direct impact on the body's immunological defenses against disease.

Same brain pathways

It is probably no coincidence that relaxation response and religious experience share headquarters in the brain. The relaxation response is controlled by the amygdala, a small almond-shaped structure in the brain that together with the hippocampus and hypothalamus makes up the limbic system. The limbic system plays a key role in emotions, sexual pleasure, deep-felt memories and, it seems, spirituality.

Dr. Arabia believes that this same neuronal and hormonal pathways are the basis for the "placebo effect"—that if a patient truly believes a therapy is useful, even if it is a sugar pill or some oil, that belief has the power to heal.

This leads us to thinking that the benefits of religious faith are even greater. If one has faith in medical treatment, that in itself is therapeutic for most common ailments. If you believe in an invincible and infallible force, it carries even more healing power.

We don't have to wait for science to determine if praying works through some supernatural factor. We can be our own scientists where personal experience makes for sufficient laboratory.

The path to God is as much a science where the individual can explore the mind-body-spirit connection in his own laboratory of a human body. Guided by what science has established thus far and by those who have been there.

Enjoy health through lifestyle medicine

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

WHATEVER work we do, stress is simply inevitable. If we don't have any work, it can even be more stressful. We just have to find the right balance between work and relaxation to make our body and mind stress-proof.

Stress at work and fatigue increase the chance of acute infections such as common colds, flu-like illnesses and gastroenteritis. Studies show that employees in highly demanding jobs suffer from colds 20 percent more often than employees in less demanding positions. On the other hand, job insecurity as a result of, for example, reorganizations, leads to an increase in flu and gastroenteritis cases.

Employees working nightshifts have a higher chance of developing infections than daytime employees. The risk is greatest among those who work in a three-shift system.

Unhealthy stress-causing body distress can even depress the immune system—the body's defense mechanisms—and lead to life-threatening illnesses like cancer and severe infections.

Symptoms of stress

The following are telltale signs and symptoms of unhealthy stress:

- Persistent irritability and anxiety
- Insomnia
- Occasional forgetfulness and/or inability to concentrate
- Absenteeism or tardiness for work
- Tiredness and fatigue for no reason
- Procrastination and indecision
- Increased use of coffee, alcohol or tobacco
- Resentful, indifferent and defiant attitude
- Chronic stress-related illnesses (headache, stomach ache, bowel problems)

Coping with stress

It doesn't mean, however, that we have to quit work and give up all our goals and ambitions. The trick is to teach the body how to cope with stress.

It has been shown that people may react differently to the same stress level. Stress may be a motivator for some but a health-breaker for others. The good news is that we can control stress, and not inflict injury on ourselves by aggravating it.

The New Healthy Lifestyle Program was recently launched by the Manila Adventist Medical Center (formerly Manila Sanitarium Hospital) to help executives and workers achieve a sound balance between health and work.

Aside from stress and burnout management, the program includes weight management, strengthening and body building, fitness and aerobics, therapeutic massage and hydrotherapy, nutrition and diet counseling, laughter therapy, sports injury rehabilitation, and physical conditioning for the elderly.

Lectures on how to modify one's lifestyle to prevent common medical problems are given by authorities on the subject.

The program offers a one- to three-day stay in the hospital, depending on the requirements of the participants. There are specific programs for those with diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, arthritis and weight problems. One goes home with tailor-fit recommendations that can go a long way in redirecting one's lifestyle and attitude for a healthier and more productive life, no matter how stressful one's work is.

"The positive benefits you'll gain from the program can last you a lifetime," says Dr. Bibly Macaya, president of MAMC and program director. He explains that the unique three-day program does not only include the typical executive checkup, it also highlights a customized lifestyle change program with a one-year follow-up phase to check on the progress of each participant.

"Our special team of professionals provides a level of personal medical attention rarely found in any healthcare setting. They communicate regularly to share and receive updates on your individual progress and to focus on areas that may need special attention," says Dr. Macaya.

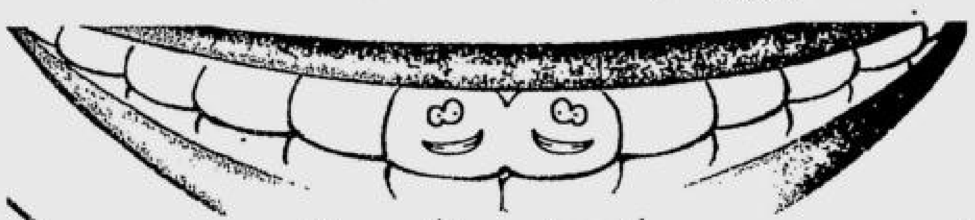
This program offered by MAMC is probably the only program in Metro Manila that can give patients and potentially high-risk individuals with unhealthy lifestyle practices the necessary skills and confidence to maintain and monitor their new healthy lifestyle with the continuous supervision of health experts.

Perhaps it would be a good idea for doctors themselves to be enrolled in such a program. Doctors sometimes can make the worst patients, and we may not be exactly exemplary models of the healthy lifestyle we preach.

Those interested may call 536-3677 or 525-9191 local 126.

ASK THE DENTIST

Paul R. De Castro, DMD



Bonding teeth

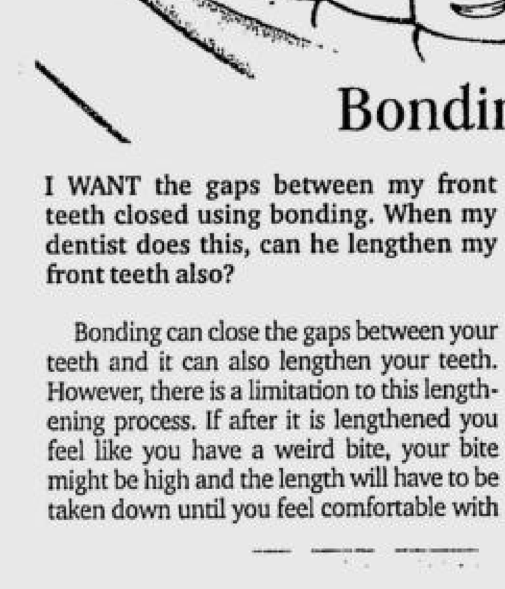
I WANT the gaps between my front teeth closed using bonding. When my dentist does this, can he lengthen my front teeth also?

Bonding can close the gaps between your teeth and it can also lengthen your teeth. However, there is a limitation to this lengthening process. If after it is lengthened you feel like you have a weird bite, your bite might be high and the length will have to be taken down until you feel comfortable with your bite. Any high bite will only wear down the bonding or make it come off.

Many patients are very happy with bonding results that lengthen or help give that more even look for teeth that appear too short. The look is great but bonding also tends to absorb stain through the years so you might need to change it every two or five years depending on your staining habits.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com

KIDS' QUIZ



What's in a name?

"THAT which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." Juliet speaks these immortal lines in the classic play "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare. Some of us have two or more given names and as many more nicknames. Flowers, too, have at least two names—one common name and one scientific name. Check your knowledge of the scientific names of Philippine flowers by matching their common name on the left with their scientific name on the right.

Common name		Scientific name
1.	Adelfa (oleander)	a) *Allamanda charticat*
2.	Gumamela (hibiscus, china rose shoeflower)	b) *Allium sativum L.*
3.	Kalatsutsi (frangipan)	c) *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis L.*
4.	Kampanilya (yellow bell)	d) *Ixora cocinea L.*
5.	Sampaguita (Arabian jasmine)	e) *Jasminum sambac (L.) Aiton*
6.	Santan (dwarf santan)	f) *Nerium indicum*
7.	Waling-waling	g) *Plumiera acuminata*
		h) *Vanda sanderiana Reichb.f.*

Score: 1-2 Good; 3-4 Very Good; 5-7 Excellent

Answers: 1-f; 2-c; 3-g; 4-a; 5-e; 6-d; 7-h

PDI RESEARCH

What women ask

By Ma. Luisa V. Torralba-Mangubat, M.D., FPOGS, FPCS

Why do women menstruate?

The process which leads to menstruation is a complex interaction between the brain, the ovaries and the uterus. Suffice it to say, the endometrium thickens as a preparation for a possible pregnancy. If pregnancy develops, this thickens further to allow the fertilized egg to burrow into it and attach for the proper development of the embryo. If pregnancy does not develop, this thickened inner lining must be shed off in preparation for the next cycle.

My menstruation comes monthly but at different dates. Is this normal?

Although the average cycle is 28 days (counting from the first day of one menstrual period to the first day of the next menstrual period), the normal cycle is from 25 – 35 days. Your period can come anytime within this range and you will still be considered normal. Having your period too often (less than 25 days interval) or too infrequent (greater than 35 days) warrants a consultation with your ob-gyn. A woman who used to have regular menses but miss it suddenly must be worked up for possible pregnancy.

Why is it that at times I use up only 1 sanitary pad a day and at times more than 3?

During menstruation, the inner lining is accompanied by blood which then gives us the bloody discharge during this period. The average length of this menstrual blood flow is 3 – 5 days and the amount of blood loss is about 80 ml. This will be like using 3 moderately soaked sanitary pads a day during waking hours. There are variations in the length and amount of menstrual flow. This can be affected by hormones, medications and even physical or mental stress. To maintain feminine hygiene, sanitary pads must be changed every 3 – 4 hours even if you feel dry, to prevent the build up of bacteria. If the amount of your flow is heavier, change pads more often. It will be cheaper in the long run since medications for vaginal infection can be quite costly.

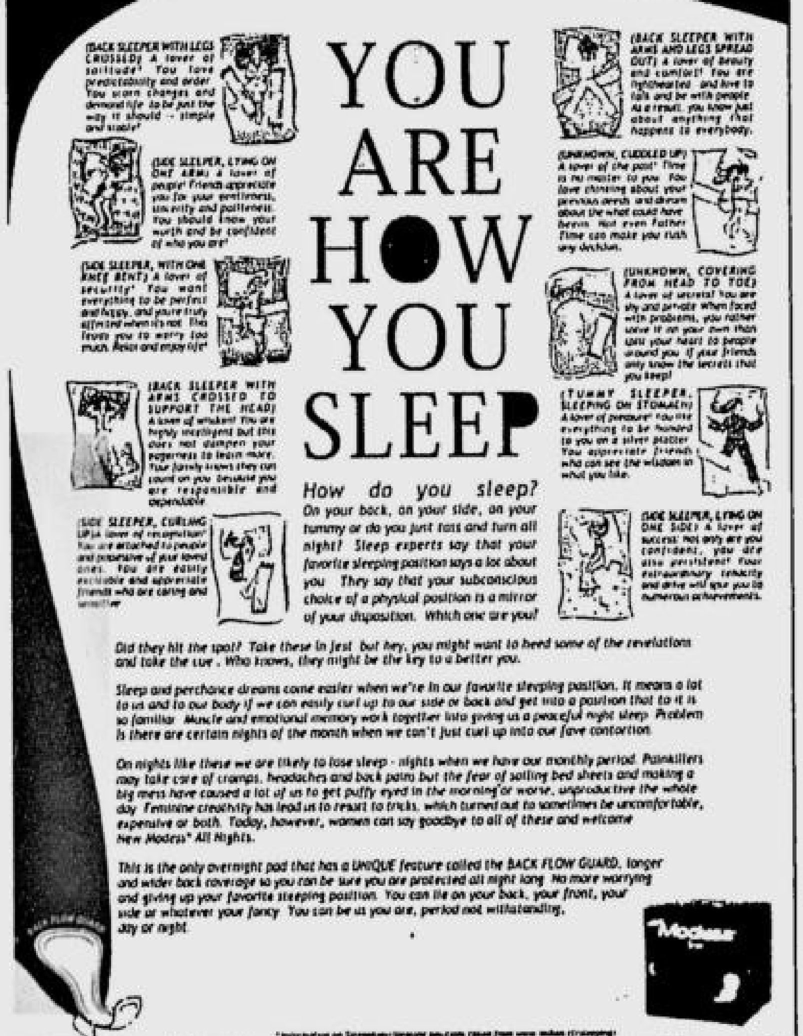
Is it OK to use pantiliners?

Pantiliners are a thinner version of the sanitary pad. Being such, they most probably will not be able to absorb the regular menstrual flow. However, immediately before or after your regular flow, you may have some minimal bloody discharge for which a pantiliner will do. Pantiliners were specifically designed for everyday use. They aim to absorb the usual vaginal secretions including sweat and even urine for those with light urinary incontinence. Just like sanitary pads, to maintain feminine hygiene, you must change them every 3-4 hours or more often, as soon as they get soaked.

I was told that menstrual flow stops while we are asleep since we hardly move. Mine does not stop. Is this unusual?

Menstrual flow does not stop even if you are lying down. The process of shedding off the inner lining with concomitant escape of blood continues but the outflow may become less due to the supine position. There is no particular sleeping position that can influence the amount of menstrual flow. Your sleeping position is a reflection of your personality (*see related article - YOU ARE HOW YOU SLEEP*). You can lie on your back, side or stomach and the effect on your menstrual flow is the same. It has been shown that we do not actually maintain just one sleeping position but change position all throughout the night. Certain situations make us toss and turn more often, such as when we are in an emotional roller coaster. Do not worry. Your menstrual flow will not become more profuse because of this. Just relax. After all, this is what sleeping is for.

(Dr. Malu Torralba-Mangubat is an Obstetrician-Gynecologist. She is a consultant at the Medical Center Manila. Dr. Malu writes a monthly column on Ob-Gyn concerns at the e-zine www.herword.com where she had a featured article on the Myths & Misconceptions About Menstruation.)


YOU ARE HOW YOU SLEEP

How do you sleep? On your back, on your side, on your tummy or do you just toss and turn all night? Sleep experts say that your favorite sleeping position says a lot about you. They say that your subconscious choice of a physical position is a mirror of your disposition. Which one are you?

Did they hit the spot? Take these in jest but hey, you might want to heed some of the revelations and take the cue. Who knows, they might be the key to a better you.

Sleep and perchance dreams come easier when we're in our favorite sleeping position. It means a lot to us and to our body if we can easily curl up to our side or back and get into a position that to it is so familiar. Muscle and emotional memory work together into giving us a peaceful night sleep. Problem is there are certain nights of the month when we can't just curl up into our fave contortion.

On nights like these we are likely to lose sleep - nights when we have our monthly period. Painkillers may take care of cramps, headaches and back pains but the fear of soiling bed sheets and making a big mess have caused a lot of us to get puffy eyed in the morning or worse, unproductive the whole day. Feminine creativity has lead us to resort to tricks, which turned out to sometimes be uncomfortable, expensive or both. Today, however, women can say goodbye to all of these and welcome New Modess* All Nights.

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Feel fresh all-day everyday with Carefree Pantiliners

ADVT

PPA seeks funding for port projects

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINE Ports Authority yesterday said it would try to secure funding from multilateral agencies like the Japan Bank for International Cooperation in financing millions of pesos of port development, rehabilitation and expansion in Visayas and Mindanao.

PPA general manager Alfonso Cusi said there were 10 ports along the Maharlika Highway linking the Bicol region with the Visayas and Mindanao that needed upgrading and improvement.

"We hope to secure funding assistance from multilateral lending agencies. We would try to talk with JBIC and the likes of Development Bank of the Philippines," said Cusi.

Improving a port, according to Cusi, usually involves between P70-P80 million depending on the extent of the required expansion or rehabilitation.

Cusi said the PPA had started a feasibility study to determine how much it would cost to modernize the 10 ports along Maharlika Highway. The PPA had tapped Pacific Consultants International Philippine Inc., a local unit of a Tokyo-based consulting firm, to help prepare the feasibility study.

These facilities, he added, should form part of the Strong Republic Nautical Highway that gave commuters an alternative mode of transport using a combination of land and sea travel in a country with more than 7,000 islands.

The so-called RORO or roll-on, roll-off vessels are integral to developing the Nautical Highway as passengers could bring their cars or ride buses to go, for instance, to Boracay from Manila.

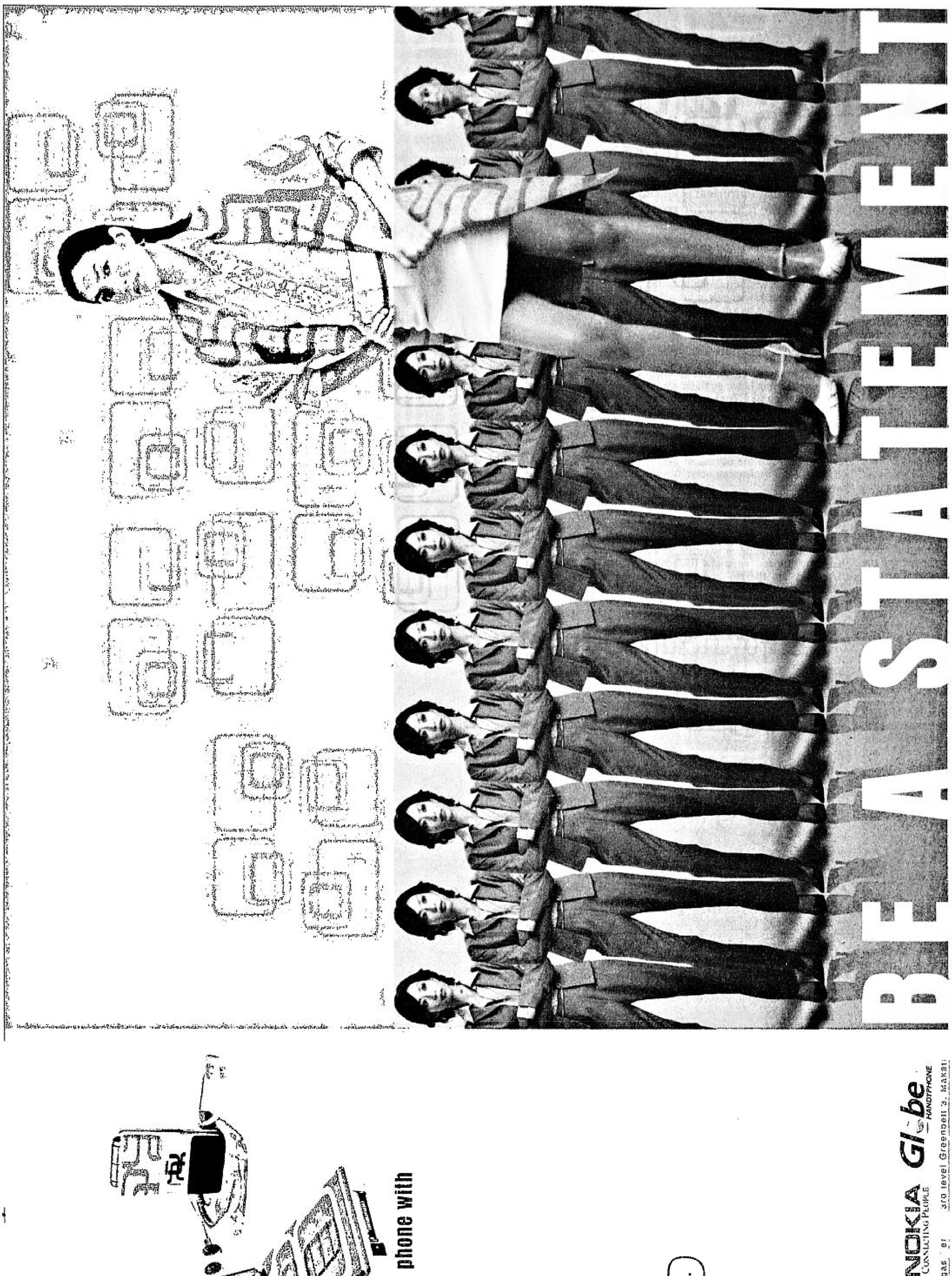
Cusi said that using the RORO from Manila to Boracay would cost only about P600 to P700 per person compared to more than P3,000 in air fare. A bus company even offers a Manila-Caticlan route for P750. It is just a 30-minute boat ride from Caticlan to Boracay.

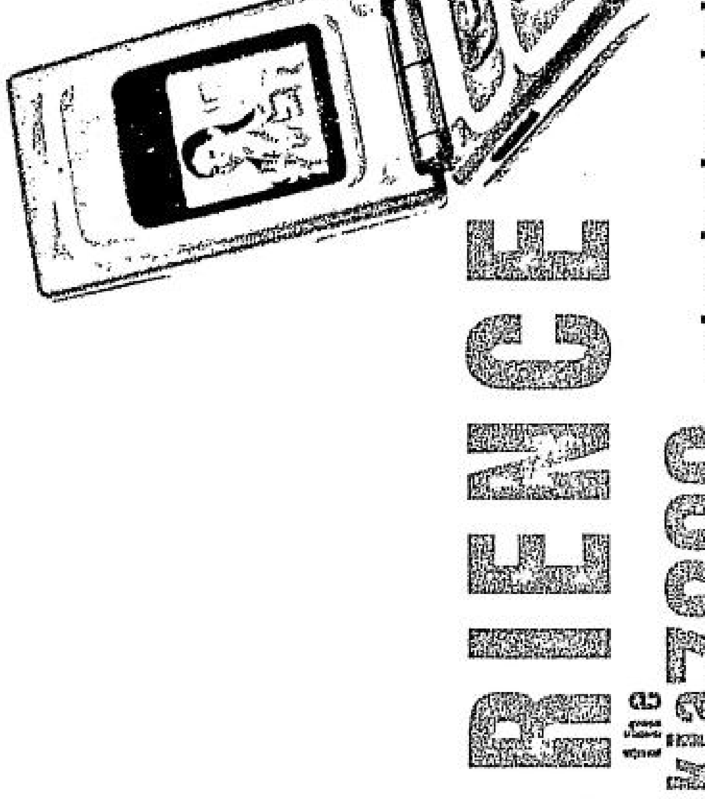
The ports along Maharlika Highway considered for development are those in San Ricardo in Southern Leyte, Bonbonon in Negros Oriental, Sibulan in Negros Oriental, Santander in Cebu, San Isidro Port in Northern Samar, Liloan Port in Southern Leyte, Lipata Port in Surigao del Norte and Pulawan Port in Zamboanga del Norte.

Cusi said the PPA had already started modernizing the Matnog Port in Sorsogon while the government would like to put up a new facility in Allen, Northern Samar.

The PPA chief said that after the government launched the Nautical Highway, there had been increased activity in the areas covered by these new facilities.

In the Roxas-Caticlan link, for example, passenger number and RORO vehicles grew by an average of 375 percent while total cargo volume increased by an average of 128 percent from April to July 2003.





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E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph
SATURDAY Special
Editor **Nestor U. Torre** Assistant Editor **Rito P. Asilo**

Young stars stress importance of education

By Jocelyn Valle

TWO weeks from now, **Michael Agassi** will officially become a high school graduate. But the younger brother of Carlos Agassi won't be able to personally receive his diploma.

"I'll be working that day," explains Michael, one of the leading men of Sarah Geronimo in "Sarah, the Teen Princess." Michael doesn't really mind missing the special occasion because he doesn't know the other graduates of St. Mary's in Makati City.

"I enrolled in the school's home study program in fourth year high school. It follows the same curriculum, but sessions with teachers are one-on-one," he explains.

He has decided to defer college, but when he's ready, he'll take up aeronautics to pursue his dream of becoming a pilot.

Graduation day

And what about **Jolina Magdangal's** memories of her graduation day? Pointing to the upper part of her right ear, the "Star-Struck Kids" host shares that she got an earring hole after completing high school at the Colegio de San Lorenzo in Quezon City.

The singer-actress also has fond memories of the retreats that she participated in. She became very close to her classmates, and she was touched by how they supported her struggle to balance her studies and her promising show biz career. "They would

YOUNG/ C4

CRUZ. Vows to get his diploma—soonest!

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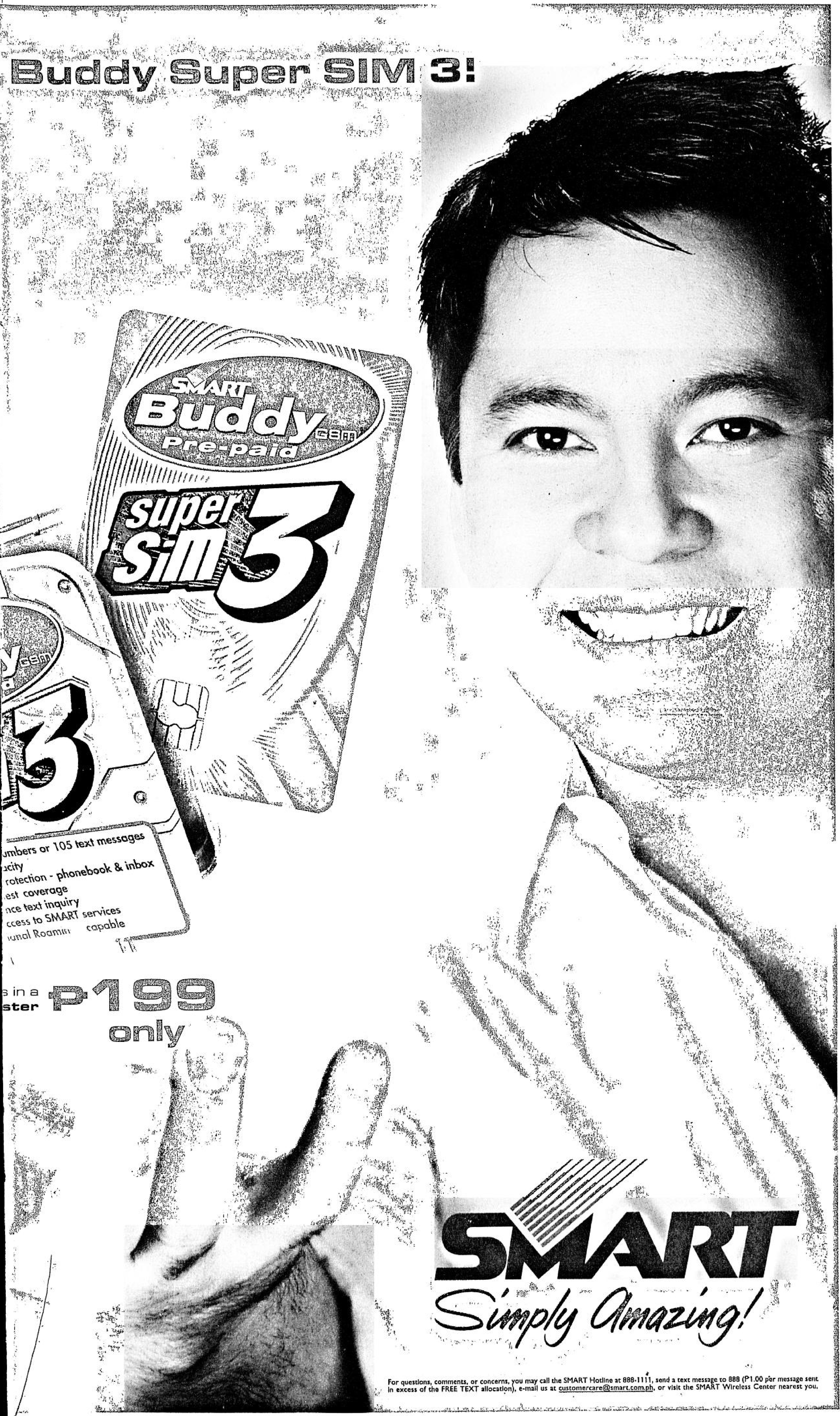

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'Tara Tena' opens doors for Jonathan Manalo

By Andy Bais

WINNING a songwriting competition is the fastest way for composers to be recognized in the local music industry.

Jonathan Manalo's turn came when he topped ABS-CBN's "Himig Handog" competition in 2001 via his youthful anthem, "Tara Tena."

His winning streak continued when he finished second runner-up at last year's Metropop with "Buti Na Lang," interpreted by his favorite R & B artist, Kyla.

MANALO. Gospel songwriter.

Mainstream music

Before breaking into mainstream music, Jonathan was already writing gospel songs. He recorded his first composition, "Aming Panginoon," an upbeat worship song, at age 13 for Pambatang Papuri, of which he was a member. He stayed with the group for more than 10 years, and has worked either as composer and singer on nine gospel albums.

Jonathan confesses that he submitted songs for pop artists while he was still with Papuri. "But they were not chosen because I was a nobody. *Talagang mahirap makapasok ang* new composer *sa* music industry unless *may na*-prove *ka na*. Artists, in general, prefer established songwriters," he laments.

Winning at "Himig Handog" has changed all that. Suddenly, he became a much sought-after composer, and projects keep coming. He has written songs for Gary Valenciano, Kyla and Nina. He is also slated to produce a dance album for Regine Velasquez this year.

Theme songs

He is in demand as writer of theme songs for ABS-CBN shows such as "Atta Girl," "Klasmeyts" and "Star Circle Search," his latest work. "Tara Tena" became the title of a youth-oriented TV show.

The 25-year-old magna cum laude graduate from PUP admits that he wanted to write only gospel songs. But the success of Soc Villanueva, Jungee Marcelo and Arnel de Pano, who all started as gospel songwriters, inspired him to join competitions. "It's funny, *nakakalaban ko pa sila ngayon,"* he laughs.

Upbeat

He describes his songwriting style as non-traditional: *"Siguro, dahil bata pa ako. Ayoko ng mga nakaka-antok na kanta.* I write songs that are upbeat and have a positive outlook in life. I want to inspire people."

But Jonathan can also sing up a storm. This we found out at an album launch where he was the surprise guest.

What's his dream album like? "*Parang* David Foster type, where I'll write the songs and play the piano for Gary V, Kyla, Regine Velasquez, Jaya, Nina and Lani Misalucha," he laughs.

Relieving pain

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

PHYSICAL pain is a part of life. How do we deal with it? Without consulting a physician, people automatically conclude that painkillers are the solution.

Unfortunately, painkillers are not the perfect remedy. Sometimes, they complicate the situation.

Analgesics

Prescription analgesics known as opioids, for example, can cause chemical dependence

Deborah Mitchell's book, "Nature's Painkillers," points out that over-the-counter pain relievers should not be spared from being on the "watch-out" list.

Regarding aspirin, she states: "With prolonged use, this can cause irritation and bleeding of the gastrointestinal tract, ringing in the ears, allergic reactions and complications during labor."

How do we deal with pain without risking our health? What are some natural painkillers?

There is bromelain, which comes from pineapple. Mitchell states, "In addition to its anti-inflammatory properties, bromelain is effective in relieving digestive disorders, enhancing wound healing and relieving sinusitis."

Beneficial

And turmeric or yellow ginger (*luyang dilaw*) is beneficial against dysmenorrhea, liver disorders and rheumatoid arthritis.

How does it work? Mitchell explains, "The curcumin in turmeric appears to reduce pain by depleting the nerve endings of the neurotransmitter that carries pain receptors. As an anti-inflammatory, curcumin prevents the release of substances that cause inflammation."

Turmeric can be found in powder form in supermarkets and in Indian specialty stores. Patients with gallstones and blood-clotting disorders should use turmeric therapy under a doctor's care.

Email lotuspond108@hotmail.com

Young stars . . .

From page C1

always remind me not to give up," she recalls.

After high school, Jolina enrolled in a non-degree Theater Arts course at UP, but she had to eventually give it up because of her hectic schedule. When she goes back to school, Jolina plans to take up business management or interior design.

Sunshine Dizon, on the other hand, is now taking up business management at the College of St. Benilde. She recalls crying on her graduation day in grade school because she thought she was going to get a medal, but didn't. "I felt bad because my mother bought a new dress for the occasion," she admits.

Then, Sunshine opted for a home study program in high school.

Good example

"Nobody can take it away from you," she boosts the importance of education. "People will respect you more. Your diploma will give you confidence. And you can be a good example to your kids."

So, even if Sunshine, who plays Rufa Mae Quinto's younger sister in "Masikip ang Dibdib," can't take a full load every semester, she knows she'll eventually finish college.

John Lloyd Cruz considers his elementary graduation day a turning point in his young life. "I felt that bigger things were in store for me," recounts the star of "It Might Be You." "At the time, I was bent on becoming a soldier."

But, as fate would have it, show biz beckoned. Then, he had to transfer to another institution because his school frowned on a career in entertainment.

With a heavy heart, John Lloyd left his classmates since prep. He studied at a new school for one year before he shifted to the home study program. He does not have a high school diploma yet, but he vows to get one—soonest!

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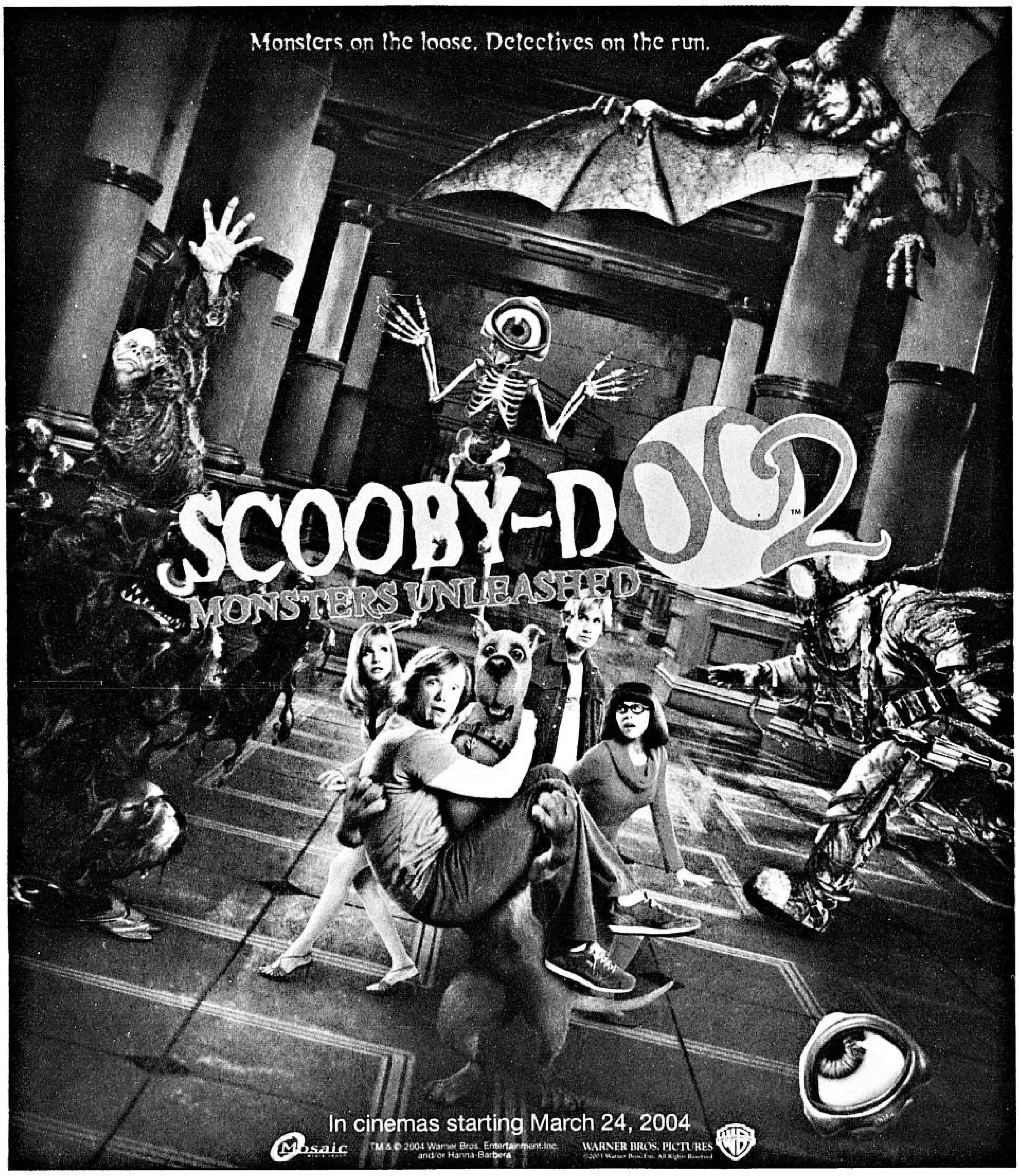
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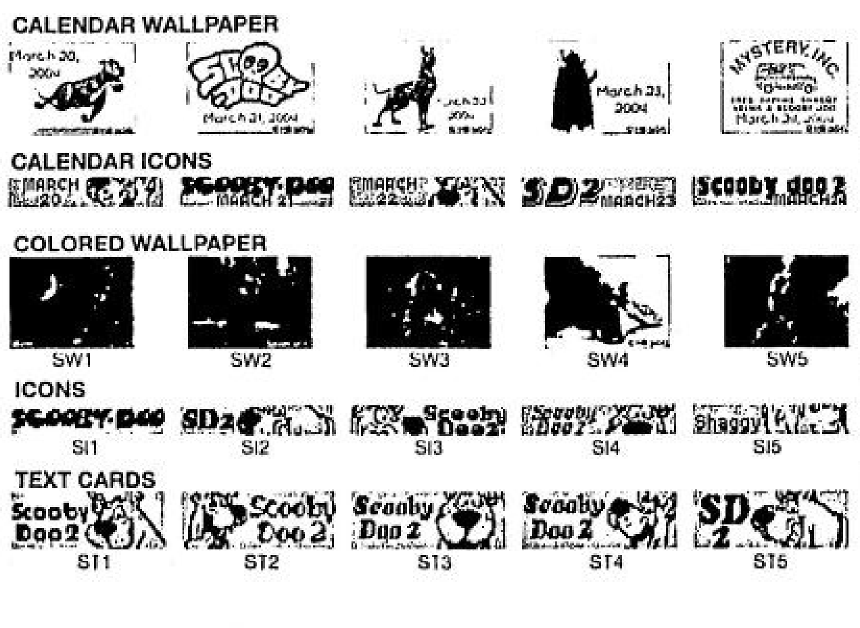

CAVIEZEL. Topbills two current films.

SATURDAY *Special*

Hollywood rediscovers Caviezel

By Nestor U. Torre

AFTER a number of film seasons in the biz, Jim Caviezel now finds himself Hollywood's "new" star of the moment. He's playing Jesus Christ in Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," the biggest hit thus far in

HOLLYWOOD/ D2

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Stylish thriller banks on stars' charisma

By Rito P. Asilo

"TAKING LIVES." Slovenly-paced scenes don't lend genuine tension to storytelling.

TRUST Angelina Jolie and a charismatic ensemble (Ethan Hawke, Olivier Martinez, Jean-Hugues Anglade) to add credibility and verve to a repackaged retread of a psychological suspense-thriller. After all, it takes some thespic skills and artistic gumption to infuse freshness into an overused storyline.

FBI profiler

In D.J. Caruso's "Taking Lives," which is based on Michael Pye's novel, Jolie plays FBI profiler Illeana Scott, who is summoned by the Canadian government to help track down a serial killer who assumes his victims' identities after smashing their faces beyond recognition.

In the course of the investigation, Scott is forced to deal with unfriendly, French-speaking detectives who question her quirky, unconventional ways: The first time she is seen onscreen, she's found lying on her back in the burial site where a victim has been found. Her ability at observation can overwhelm even the most skilled actors we know!

In one of the film's stupefying, thriller fan-friendly plot twists, the team stumbles upon a witness, art dealer James Costa (Ethan Hawke), who claims to have seen one of the actual killings and the protean perpetrator, whom he readily sketches on Scott's drawing pad.

Lust at first sight

It's lust at first sight between Scott and Costa, and soon enough, the cool, detached demeanor of the brilliant FBI profiler gradually thaws as their romance passionately percolates.

Later, Canadian investigator Tcheky Karyo tries to convince Illeana not to quit her job. Ethical worker that she is, she is concerned that her growing fondness for the witness is clouding her professional judgment.

There are enough brain-twisting subplots here that would make Ann Rule

STYLISH/ D3

Glenn Close is a towering talent

By Behn Cervantes

CLOSE. Made her debut as Robin Williams' liberated mother.

GLENN Close is one of our most versatile film actresses—she has portrayed pre-Elizabethan ladies, modern bitches, a harassed housewife and other multifaceted characters. She made her debut in George Roy Hill's "The World According to Garp," as Robin Williams' liberated mother. She had already made waves on the legitimate stage before that.

Estate

Born a 12th-generation New Englander, she grew up on a 500-acre estate in posh Greenwich, Connecticut. As a child, her fathe, a Harvard-trained surgeon, frequently took her on trips to the Belgian Congo, where he had opened a free clinic.

She won the Tony for her performances in "The Real Thing" and "Death and The Maiden." But she is best remembered as the reincarnation of Norma Desmond in Andrew Lloyd Webber's spectacular "Sunset Boulevard."

Close was so awesome as Desmond that the composer decided to end the musical's run when she left the show! The multi-awarded producer-composer even fired Academy Award winner Faye Dunaway and Patty Lupone, the original Evita, from the musical's Los Angeles and London productions.

Performance

I caught a performance of "Sunset Boulevard" soon after it opened. I was initially peeved with the huge sets that included a huge winding staircase, giant candelabra—and a swimming pool downstage! I feared that they would completely upstage the actors.

However, when the diminutive (5'3") Glenn Close made her entrance in a white gown with matching turban, everything on stage receded to the background!

What a grand entrance! She instantly grabbed the attention of the audience and thereafter manipulated it at will. All I could sigh was, "Star!" And, what a voice!

Hollywood . .

• From page D1

Film Year 2004. In fact, he has *two* starrers playing in town: he's also in "Highwaymen," a completely different movie.

Of course, it's "Passion" that has been making Caviezel's star burn particularly brightly this year. The film has no big stars, and yet it's on its way to making $300 million, a very rare feat for any film, and an "impossible" achievement for a religious production.

Focal point

Of course, the big "star" in "Passion" is Christ Himself, and director Gibson's iconic stature in the movie business cannot be gainsaid. But there's no doubt that Caviezel's felt, insightful and committed portrayal of Jesus has given the production the intense focal point and fulcrum it needs to score a direct hit on viewers' hearts.

Gibson could have had his choice of all the actors in Hollywood for the role of Jesus—so, why did he pick Caviezel? He harks back to Caviezel's breakthrough role in 1998 in Terrence Malick's "The Thin Red Line," where he played a brooding pacifist.

Gibson was impressed with Caviezel's ability to combine soulful introspection with physicality and action. Years later, in "The Count of Monte Cristo," Caviezel proved that he had the soaring range needed to convincingly play the wrongfully convicted Edmond Dantes—another intense and introspective character similar to Christ in some ways.

It also helped that, like Gibson, Caviezel took his Roman Catholic faith seriously. This spirituality isn't easy to find in Hollywood.

Spiritual transcendence

From the beginning, the director knew that the key to "Passion" would be finding an actor capable of embodying both the humanity and spiritual transcendence of Jesus .

In "Monte Cristo," Gibson had been struck by a shot of Caviezel that highlighted his penetrating eyes and honest emotion. So, he offered the actor the plum role in "Passion," which he described as so tough and fraught with pitfalls that he himself would hesitate to play it.

And yet, Caviezel was energized by the challenge set before him. He went on to use prayer as a means to deeply explore the character and tribulations of Jesus.

But nothing could really prepare him for the incredible journey that "Passion" would take him on, both as film artist and person. Day after day of filming, he was spat upon, beaten up, flogged and forced to carry a heavy cross in the freezing cold. He was even hit by lightning while hanging on the cross!

It was a brutal experience, but Caviezel considered it all worth it to play the role in the most powerful, sensitive and affecting way possible. He admits that the realistic violence in the finished film could shock some viewers, but it helps account for its emotive power.

There were also unexpected psychological and spiritual challenges, but Caviezel triumphed over them as well. The result is his completely internalized, felt and believable portrayal of Jesus, which is deemed to be one of the major strengths of Mel Gibson's celebrated film.

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10.00AM	REGISTRATION FOR COSPLAY COMPETITION
10.30AM, 1.00PM, 3.15PM, 5.00PM & 7.00PM	ASTRO BOY MEET-&-GREET SESSION
11.00AM & 2.34PM	AUTOGRAPH SESSION BY MR KOJI SAWAI
11.30AM, 2.00PM & 3.45PM	COSPLAY COMPETITION – PRELIMINARY, SEMI-FINAL & FINAL
1.40PM & 4.30PM	DUNCAN CREW YOYO LIVE PERFORMANCE
5.30PM	RAGNAROK DANCE PERFORMANCE
6.15PM	PERFORMANCE BY HIP-HOP BAND '7 SHOTS'
7.30PM	PRIZE PRESENTATION FOR COSPLAY COMPETITION

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Young-adult Jolina should now focus on less juvenile concerns

By Nestor U. Torre

JOLINA Magdangal's latest movie, "Annie B.," didn't do very well on point of quality and popularity due to its unfocused direction, but the young star is doing much better on the new talent search program, Channel 7's "Star-struck Kids."

Jolina is a good choice as the show's host because she also started her performing career when she was still a child. In addition, she is pert and wacky, and relates well to the search's very young contestants.

Finalists

Coincidentally, the search's finalists are called the 14K, the name of the group of young singers formed many years ago by Ryan Cayabyab, of which Jolina was a part.

Thus, Jolina and "Star-struck Kids" are a good match, and the show is a fine addition to the young star's TV credits.

It's in the movies that Jolina's career is faltering, so she and her handlers should concentrate this year on looking for a good script and director, to make up for the disappointment that her last film starrer turned out to be.

MAGDANGAL. Pert and wacky.

We're confident that, with careful planning, Jolina can come up with a quality hit this year. The project should make full use of her acting, singing and dancing skills—an unusual combination of abilities in these parts.

Transition film

Yes, let it be a romantic-comedy musical with some insightful drama woven into it. And make it Jolina's transition film, from her teenybopper capers of old, to a more young-adult perspective more appropriate to the fact that she's now in her mid-20s.

Jolina needn't fret at the major change, because young-adult doesn't have to be morose and stodgy. She can still be entertainingly zany, but her character should be interested in less juvenile concerns than crushes, gimmicks and such.

Best production

Who can direct the film? We recall that the best production we've ever seen Jolina star in was a special "Star Studio" episode on Channel 2, a couple of years ago. That episode was the perfect showcase for Jolina because it fully and creatively exploited her unusual combination of singing, dancing and acting talents.

Why doesn't Jolina get the director of that show to handle her in her next movie? He can probably work wonders for her on the big screen as well.

In the recording field, Jolina should come out with an album projecting a more young-adult sound. Since Jolina's fans have grown up with her through the years, they should welcome her new sound and songs, because they would speak to the more mature people they have become.

Refuge away from home

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

FIFTY-TWO repatriated overseas Filipino workers from Saudi Arabia recently arrived joyously at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport onboard Philippine Airlines PR 659. Of the OFWs' touching tales about Riyadh; one story was particularly inspiring:

Memorable present

As OWWA administrator Virgilio R. Angelo handed a simple yet memorable present to one-year-old Majid Rahid, the blissful face of Saniya Jakaria, a 33-year-old maid from Zamboanga City, reflected happiness.

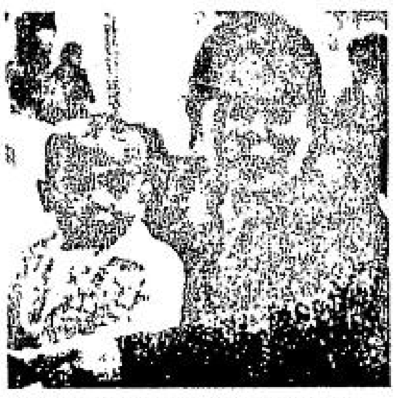
Soon, Majid's amiable Sudanese father will follow Saniya to "the city of flowers" to tie the knot with her, before the couple returns to Saudi Arabia to work.

"I didn't have problems with my employer. I was given all the amenities, and I was paid well. She gave me a cell phone and treated me like a family member," she said.

Saniya has been working in Saudi Arabia for 12 years. During her long stay there, she met and fell in love with a Sudanese driver.

When she got pregnant, she stayed in Bahay Kalinga, a haven for OFWs in Riyadh.

OWWA has left an indelible mark in the eyes of our unsung heroes. It has become part and parcel of the lives of millions of OFWs.


JAKARIA, right, with son Majid. She found love in a foreign land.

Stylish

From page D2

and Patricia Cornwell green with envy: The mother (Gena Rowlands) of one of the early victims, claims that the dead body isn't her stowaway son's, and that she may have seen him somewhere—she is sure it wasn't her son's long-dead identical twin, either!

Also, there are hidden rooms and strange-looking ceilings that don't escape Jolie's pouty, discriminating gaze. —And, ludicrous ending notwithstanding, who the heck was *that* guy under the bed—just a squatting bedspacer to help clutter up our soaring imaginations? Why would Scott be allowed to stage a sting operation all by herself?

Quibbles

Despite those quibbles, "Taking Lives" is a taut, stylish, albeit flawed thriller that banks on the charisma of Jolie, Hawke, Martinez and Kiefer Sutherland. Still, it isn't easy to weave seamless spine-tinglers like Fincher's "Seven" or Demme's "Silence of the Lambs"…

An effective thriller delivers the goods when the people you watch it with shriek and cringe in their seats as scenes unfold before their eyes.

However, some slovenly-paced scenes, especially those spent hinting at but not sufficiently exploring and explaining Sutherland's shady character, don't lend genuine tension to the storytelling.

But, given our penchant for the occasional good scare, it's safe to say that "Taking Lives" handily affirms its reason for being.

We've got it all for you!
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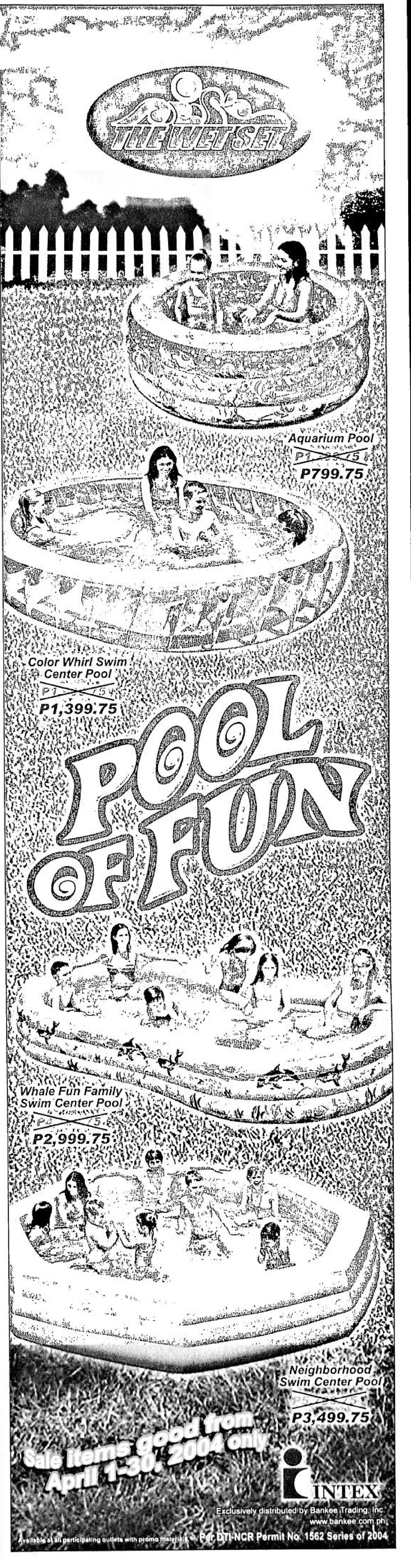
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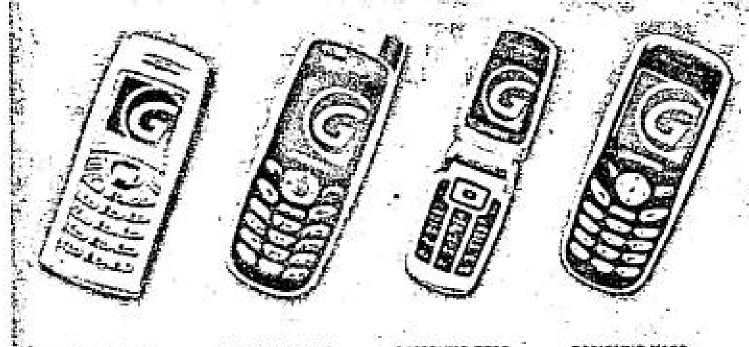

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Flex 3,500	₱ 3,500	400	₱ 4.00	₱ 4.50
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SATURDAY *Special*

Prince to release new CD

PRINCE. Struggling to raise profile after years of seclusion and declining popularity.
REUTERS

NEW YORK— Prince, who has released most of his music over the Internet since 1996, has struck a deal with Sony Music to put out his new album.

"Musicology" will be released by Sony's Columbia Records on April 20, according to Prince's NPG Records and Sony. The deal calls for Sony to manufacture and distribute the disc. The first single, the title track, will be released to radio on Monday.

The partnership is the latest effort by Prince to raise his profile after years of seclusion and declining popularity. In February, he kicked off the Grammys by performing with Beyoncé to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the groundbreaking film and album, "Purple Rain."

Arena tour

Soon afterward, he announced his first arena tour in years, and he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame last week.

"I am an artist and musician at heart, that's what I do," the 45-year-old Prince said.

"'Musicology' has no boundaries or format. It is long overdue to return to the art and craft of music—that's what this album is about. School's in session."

He has mainly eschewed major labels since his bitter 1996 split with Warner Bros. Records. When the relationship soured, he changed his name to an unpronounceable symbol and wrote the word "slave" on his cheek.

One-album deal

Prince released an album on his own NPG Records through a distribution deal with EMI that same year, and in 1999, signed with Arista Records for a one-album deal that resulted in "Rave Un2 the Joy Fantastic."

But he has primarily made his music available on his website.

AP

'Scooby-Doo 2' takes box-office lead

FREDDIE Prinze Jr., left, and Sarah Michelle Gellar topbill "Scooby-Doo 2."

LOS ANGELES—"Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed" was top dog at the box office, debuting with $29.4 million in its opening weekend.

The Coen brothers' black comedy, "The Ladykillers," starring Tom Hanks, opened in second place with $12.6 million.

Top 10

The top 10 movies at North American theaters Friday through Sunday, followed by distribution studio, gross,

"SCOOBY-DOO 2"/ E3

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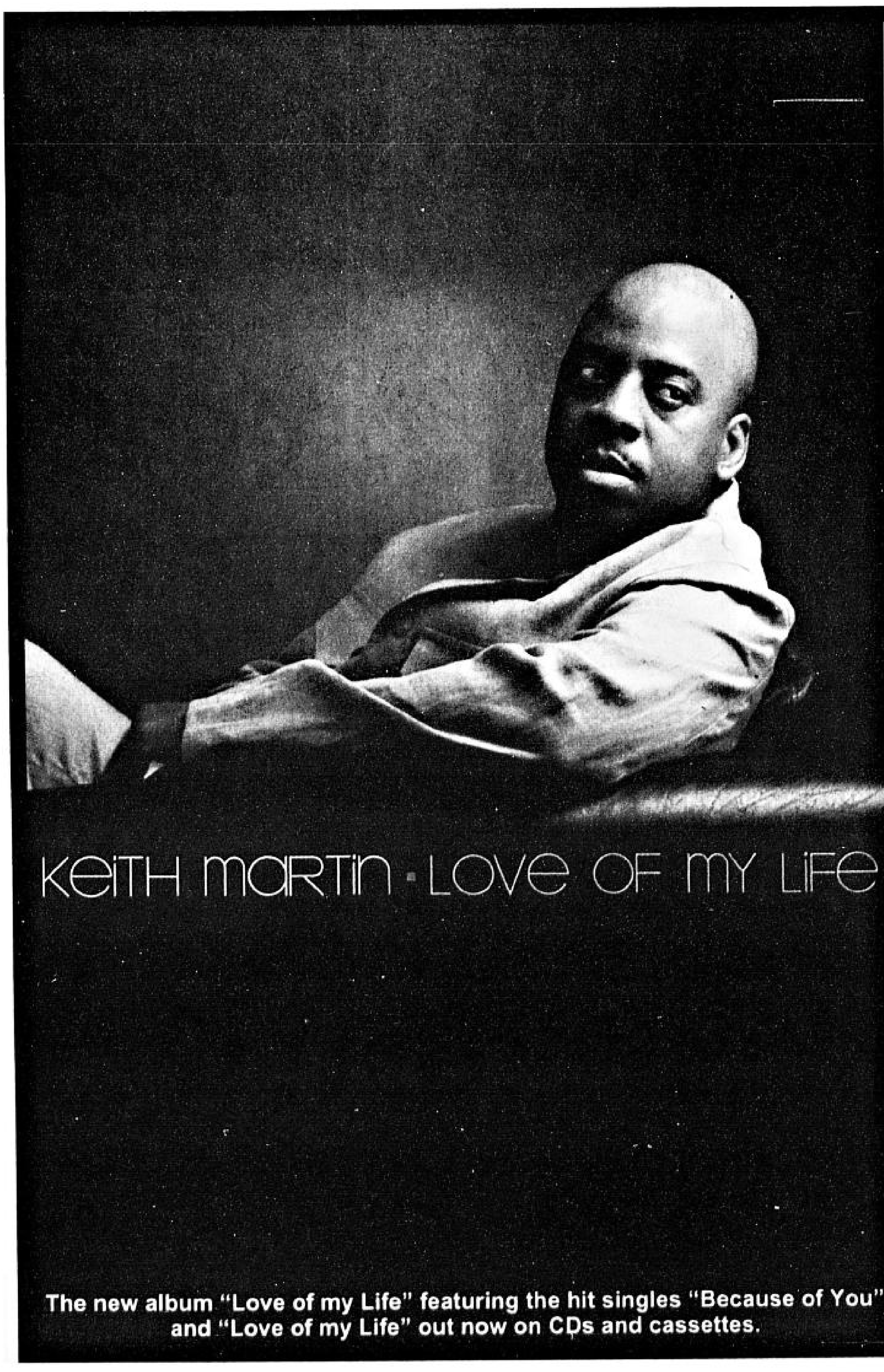

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DLOAD ARTIST SPOTLIGHT:	SONGTITLE	KEYWORD
Keith Martin	Because of You	BecauseofU
	Love of My Life	LoveofMylife

WAVE 89.1 Top Picks:

ARTIST
R Kelly
SONGTITLE
Step in the Name of Love (remix)
KEYWORD
stepindaname

ARTIST
Outkast
SONGTITLE
The way you move
KEYWORD
wayumove

ARTIST
Montell Jordan
SONGTITLE
Bottom line
KEYWORD
bottomline

ARTIST
South Border
SONGTITLE
Rainbow
KEYWORD
rainbow

ARTIST
Justin Guarini
SONGTITLE
Get here
KEYWORD
gethere

TONES IN DEMAND

SONGTITLE	ARTIST	KEYWORD
100 Years	Five for Fighting	100years
One of These Days	Michelle Branch	1ofdisdays
Stop Think	Aliya Parcs	stopthink
Come In Out of the Rain	Sheryn Regis	Comein
Hey Yah	Outkast	Heyyah
Clarity	John Mayer	Clarity
My Immortal	Evanescence	myimmortal
Baby I Love You	JLo	babyiloveyou
Shut Up	Black-Eyed Peas	shutup
Knocks Me Off My Feet	Stevie Wonder	Knocksmeoff
Overjoyed	Paolo Santos	Overjoyed
Alam Ko Di Ako, Ok Lang	Bayani Agbayani	alamkodiako
Biglaan	6CycleMind	Biglaan
Where is the Love	Black-Eyed Peas	werisdluv
The Gift	Jim Brickman/Piolo Pascual	Thegift

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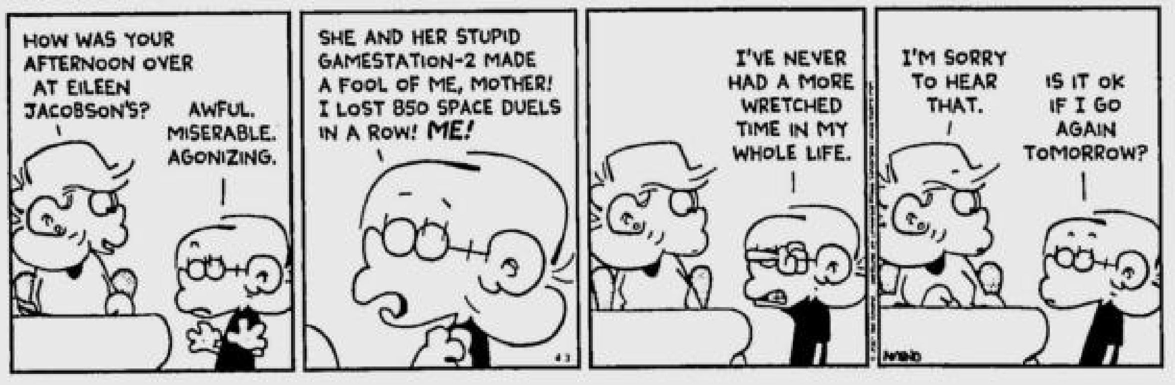
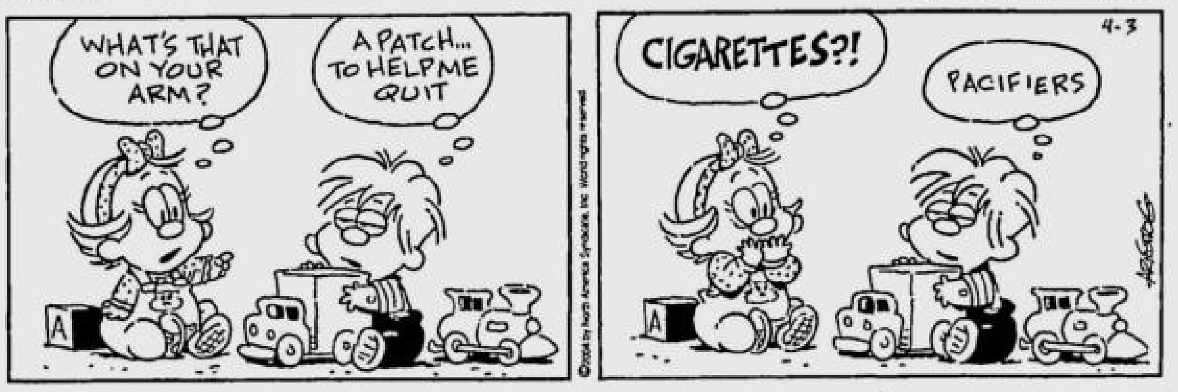
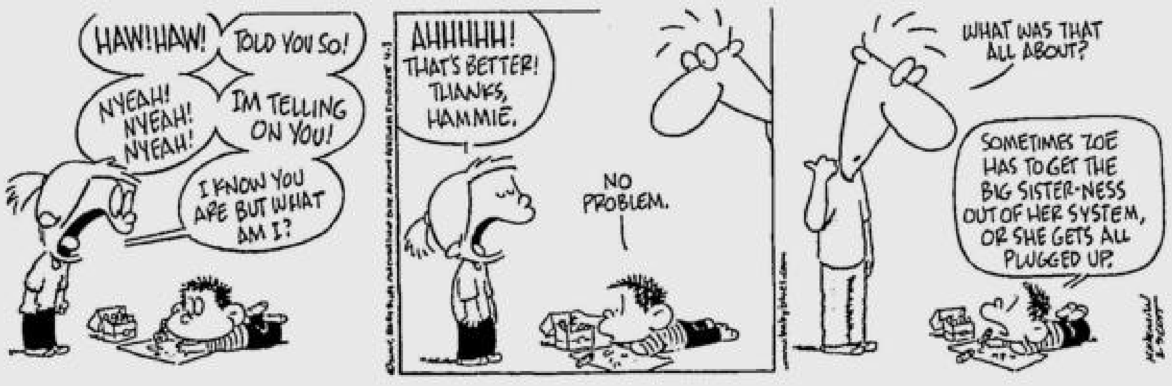

HOW WAS YOUR AFTERNOON OVER AT EILEEN JACOBSON'S?
AWFUL. MISERABLE. AGONIZING.
SHE AND HER STUPID GAMESTATION-2 MADE A FOOL OF ME, MOTHER! I LOST 850 SPACE DUELS IN A ROW! ME!
I'VE NEVER HAD A MORE WRETCHED TIME IN MY WHOLE LIFE.
I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
IS IT OK IF I GO AGAIN TOMORROW?

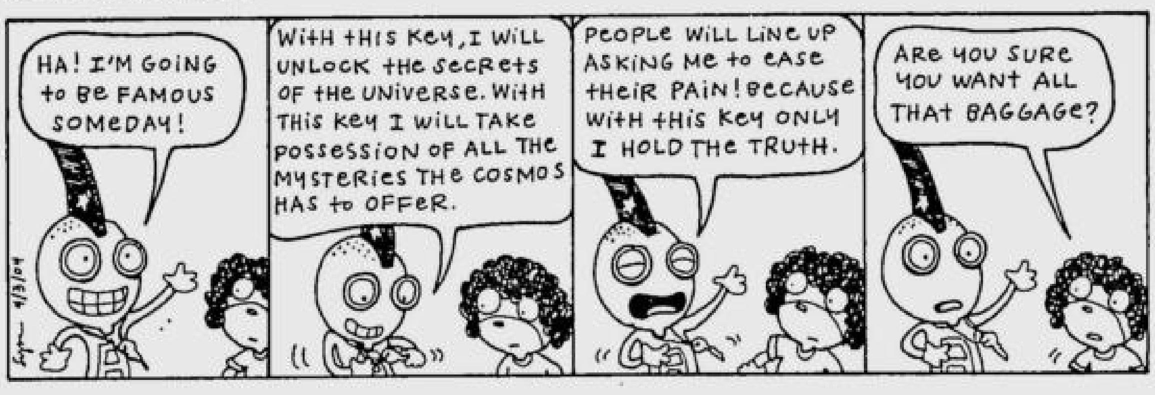
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR ARM?
A PATCH... TO HELP ME QUIT
4-3
CIGARETTES?!
PACIFIERS

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


HAW! HAW!
TOLD YOU SO!
NYEAH! NYEAH! NYEAH!
I'M TELLING ON YOU!
I KNOW YOU ARE BUT WHAT AM I?
AHHHHH! THAT'S BETTER! THANKS, HAMMIE.
NO PROBLEM.
WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
SOMETIMES ZOE HAS TO GET THE BIG SISTER-NESS OUT OF HER SYSTEM, OR SHE GETS ALL PLUGGED UP.

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HA! I'M GOING to BE FAMOUS SOMEDAY!
With this Key, I will unlock the secrets of the universe. With this key I will take possession of all the mysteries the cosmos has to offer.
People will line up asking me to ease their pain! Because with this key only I hold the truth.
Are you sure you want all that baggage?
4/3/04

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Quite often, you are at the center of things whether you intend to be or not. This is because you approach everything with passion and dedication. You are independent, intuitive and capable of working on your own. You always listen to your inner voice. Work hard in the year ahead. You will not regret it. **Birthdate of** David Hyde Pierce, actor; Marlon Brando, actor; Alec Baldwin, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): There's excitement in the air! You feel more turned-on and supercharged about life. In fact, suddenly you're curious about everything. (That's wonderful.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Give careful thought to your purchases now. You want to buy beautiful things (and you adore beautiful things). This is because, at heart, you're a collector.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): With both Venus and Mars in your sign now, you're off to the races! People are attracted to you now because you're energetic, charming and diplomatic.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You need more time to be by yourself to sort out what you want to do with your future. Important people are asking you big questions. You will need answers!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Getting along with others will be much easier in the next two months. Set aside time for lots of social occasions. Your popularity rating is climbing. Enjoy yourself!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): For some reason, many people look at you with envy now. This could be because somebody important (your boss?) seems to favor you. Consider it your good fortune.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your wish to make travel plans or possibly something to do with higher education is growing. The question is: Are you going to act on it? (Perhaps you should.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Because you're working so hard now, others are prepared to reward your efforts. Don't refuse out of false modesty what is offered to you. Accept it gratefully.

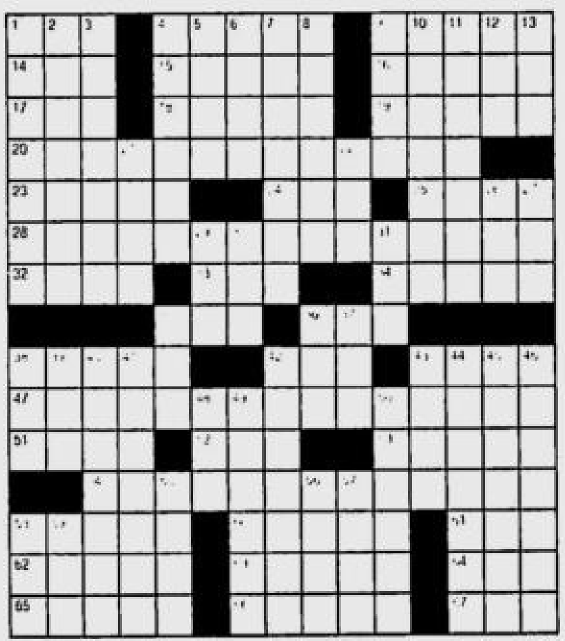
SAGITTARIUS (Nov: 22 to Dec. 21): Your ability to defend yourself with others is excellent now. That means this is the time to go after whatever you want. (This blessing will last for about six weeks.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Plan on great progress at work. In large measure, this is due to the cooperation and assistance of your co-workers at this time. Bonus!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your love life might heat up. A secret admirer is probably waiting in the wings somewhere. People find you attractive and youthful now. (Sounds good to me.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is the best time to throw a lot of energy into making where you live look more attractive. Similarly, put energy into your family dynamic. You can make everything at home shine!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Willy A. Wiseman
New York, NY

4/3/04

ACROSS
1 Clear tables
4 Max and Buddy
9 Jordan's capital
14 One-time connection
15 Item in the plus column
16 "The __ Mutiny"
17 Actor Chaney
18 Extra-strong cotton thread
19 MacDowell of "Groundhog Day"
20 Start of a quip
23 Female relative
24 High peak
25 Business VIPs
28 Part 2 of quip
32 Son of Seth
33 Is down with
34 Street edges in London
35 Kiddy
36 Crafty
38 "My Cousin Vinny" star
42 Reticent
43 Dundee native
47 Part 3 of quip
51 Gobi location
52 Former queen of Spain
53 Ancient
54 End of quip
58 "Batman Theme" composer
60 Contemptuous smile
61 Govt. financial grp.
62 Island near the Statue of Liberty
63 The king of France
64 Immigrants' subj.
65 Philosopher Josiah
66 Perfect places
67 Pc. of land

DOWN
1 Equilibrium
2 Ideal
3 Riviera resort
4 "Swan Lake," e.g.
5 So to speak
6 Exxon, formerly
7 Changes film
8 "__ by Starlight"
9 Part of USMA
10 Handcuff
11 June and July
12 Tropical cuckoo
13 Maiden-name indicator
21 Chills
22 Secret agent
26 Legal NY bookie parlor
27 His in Hyeres
29 Which person
30 Feedbag grain
31 Cloud cover
35 Draw
36 __ Na Na
37 Fleur-de-__
38 O.T. book
39 Goddess of the dawn
40 In an overly formal manner
41 Orderless
42 Gadded in London
43 Town near Caen
44 Medical symbols
45 Union
46 Mount in the Sierra Nevada
48 Theol. belief
49 Isolate
50 Actor Chuck
55 Seine feeder
56 "Final Analysis" star
57 Long time
58 That girl
59 "Do Ya" grp.

Friday's Puzzle Solved

A	D	I	T	■	O	F	T	E	N	■	M	E	L	D
P	O	M	E	■	F	L	I	N	T	■	I	D	E	O
S	J	P	T	B	F	E	L	D	H	A	N	D	N	C
E	O	S	■	R	E	N	F	■	■	L	I	S	T	S
■	■	■	D	O	N	S	■	S	I	L	O	■	■	■
H	H	A	A	K	D	E	B	H	L	A	N	D	W	H
A	E	R	I	E	■	■	R	A	S	H	■	R	E	O
B	A	N	S	■	D	R	A	M	A	■	P	O	L	S
I	D	I	■	S	E	A	S	■	■	S	U	I	T	E
T	S	F	G	C	P	C	S	H	G	A	N	D	Y	A
■	■	■	L	A	T	F	■	O	R	L	Y	■	■	■
S	P	O	O	L	■	■	A	M	E	S	■	I	O	U
T	E	D	W	A	J	P	G	E	E	A	N	D	B	B
E	L	I	E	■	A	L	E	R	T	■	I	L	I	E
P	E	E	R	■	L	O	E	S	S	■	N	E	E	R

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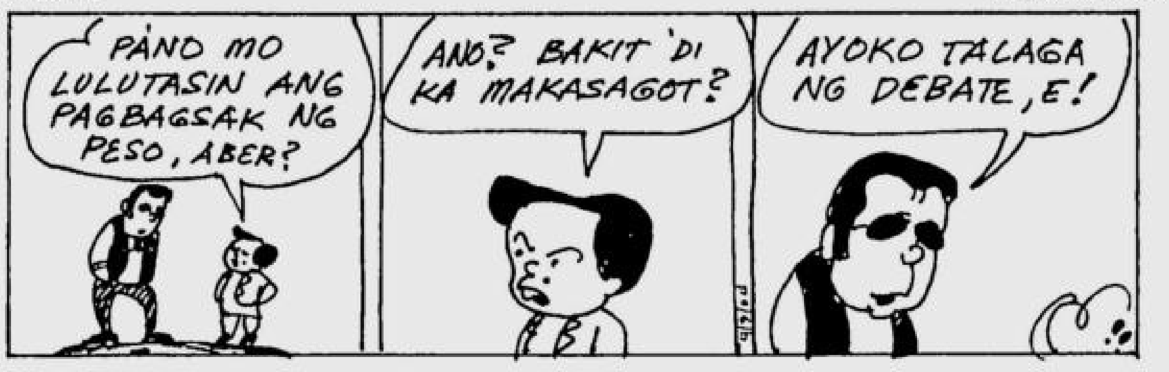
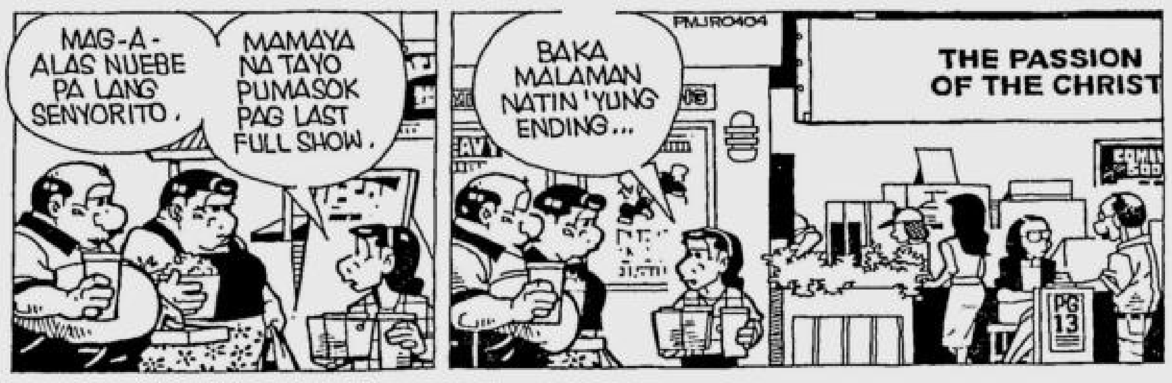
4/3/04

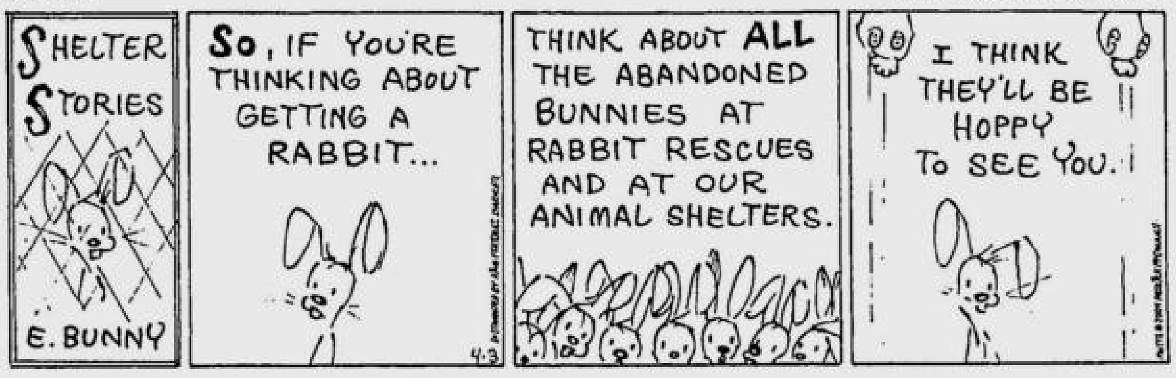
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


PANO MO LULUTASIN ANG PAGBAGSAK NG PESO, ABER?
ANO? BAKIT 'DI KA MAKASAGOT?
AYOKO TALAGA NG DEBATE, E!

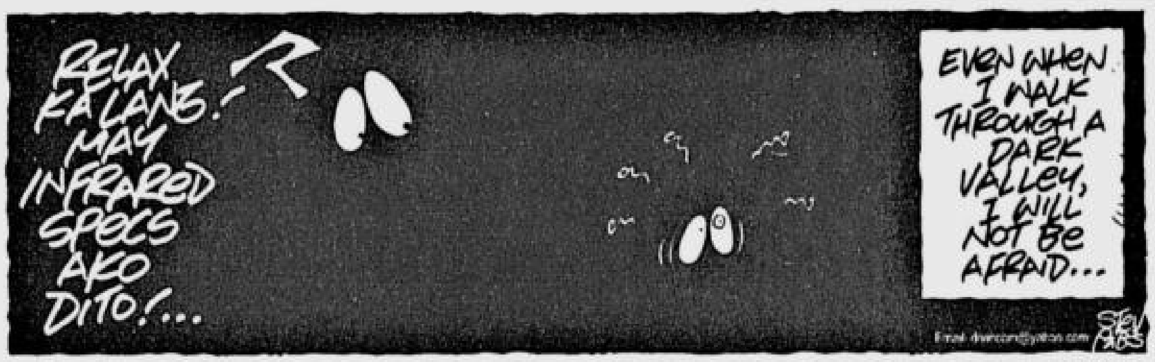
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAG-A-ALAS NUEBE PA LANG SENYORITO.
MAMAYA NA TAYO PUMASOK PAG LAST FULL SHOW.
PMJR0404
BAKA MALAMAN NATIN 'YUNG ENDING...
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
PG 13

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

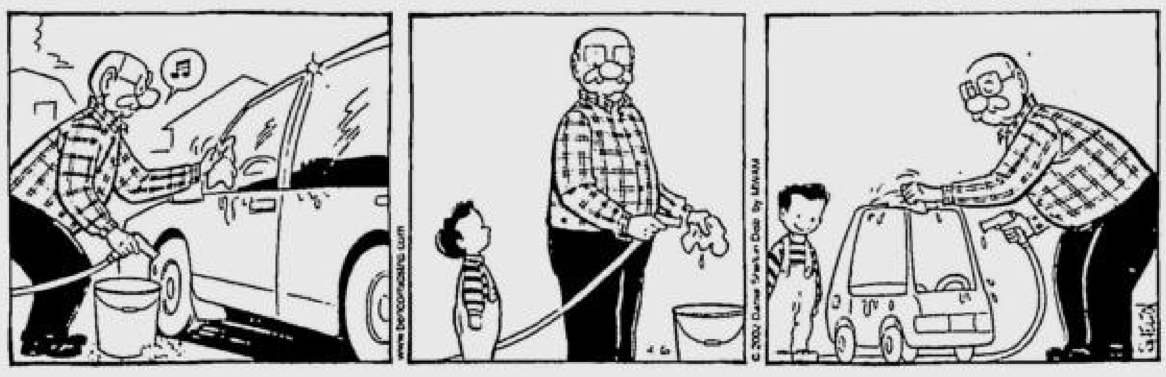

SHELTER STORIES
E. BUNNY
SO, IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT GETTING A RABBIT...
4-3
THINK ABOUT ALL THE ABANDONED BUNNIES AT RABBIT RESCUES AND AT OUR ANIMAL SHELTERS.
I THINK THEY'LL BE HOPPY TO SEE YOU.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

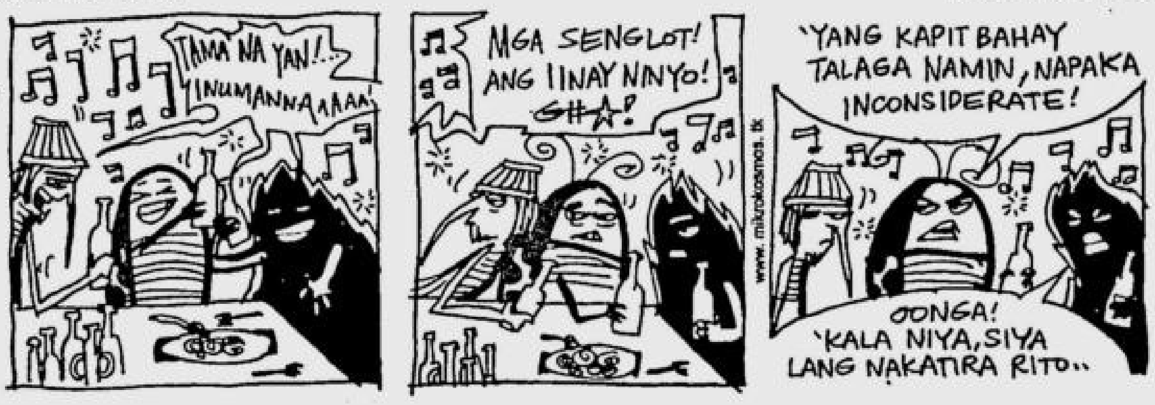

RELAX KA LANG! MAY INFRARED SPECS AKO DITO!...
EVEN WHEN I WALK THROUGH A DARK VALLEY, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID...

SA SOBRANG DAMI NG INK NA GINAMIT SA STRIP NA 'TO, NAGALIT PO ANG PRINTING PRESS.---STEVEN

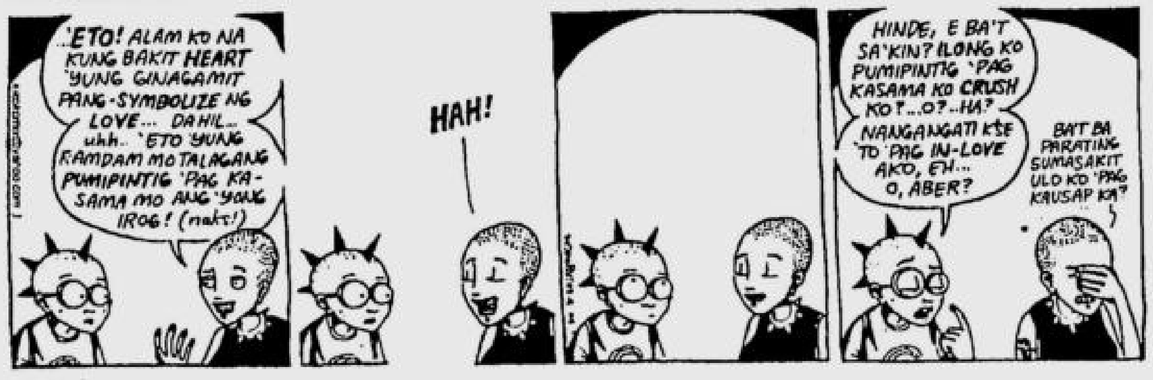
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON



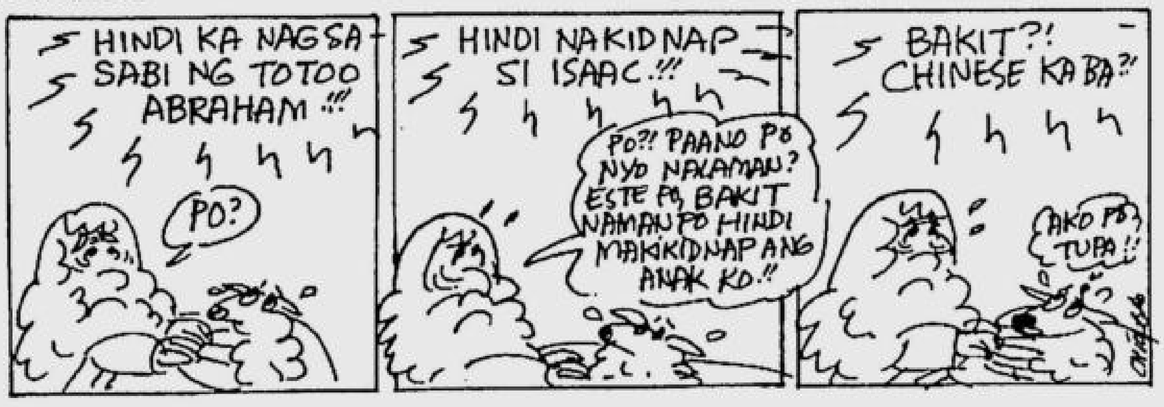
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


TAMA NA YAN!..
INUMANNAAAAA!
MGA SENGLOT! ANG IINAY NINYO!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
'YANG KAPIT BAHAY TALAGA NAMIN, NAPAKA INCONSIDERATE!
OONGA! 'KALA NIYA, SIYA LANG NAKATIRA RITO..

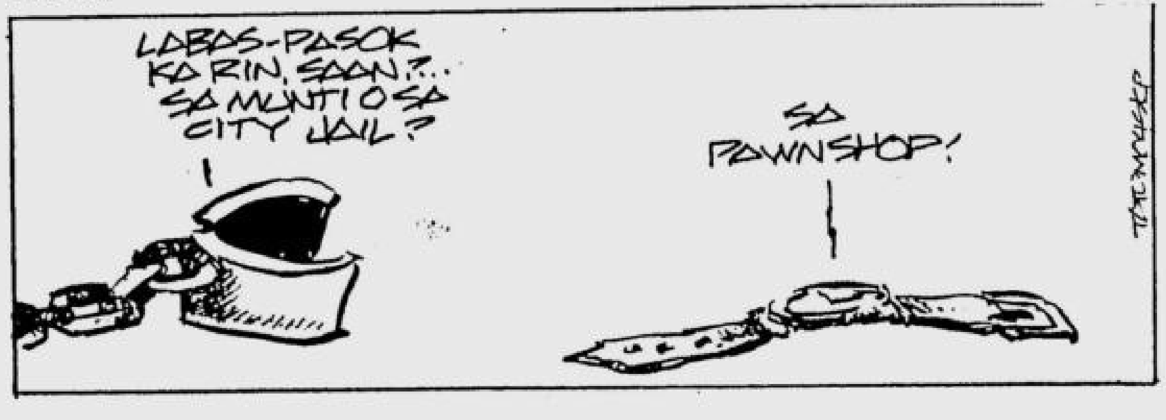
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


'ETO! ALAM KO NA KUNG BAKIT HEART 'YUNG GINAGAMIT PANG-SYMBOLIZE NG LOVE... DAHIL... uhh.. 'ETO 'YUNG KAMDAM MO TALAGANG PUMIPINTIG 'PAG KA-SAMA MO ANG 'YONG IROG! (naks!)
HAH!
HINDE, E BA'T SA'KIN? ILONG KO PUMIPINTIG 'PAG KASAMA KO CRUSH KO?...O?..HA? NANGANGATI KSE 'TO 'PAG IN-LOVE AKO, EH... O, ABER?
BAT BA PARATING SUMASAKIT ULO KO 'PAG KAUSAP KA?

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HINDI KA NAGSASABI NG TOTOO ABRAHAM!!!
PO?
HINDI NAKIDNAP SI ISAAC!!!
PO?! PAANO PO NYO NALAMAN? ESTE PO, BAKIT NAMAN PO HINDI MAKIKIDNAP ANG ANAK KO!!
BAKIT?! CHINESE KA BA?!
AKO PO TUPA!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


LABAS-PASOK KA RIN, SAAN?.. SA MUNTINLUPA CITY JAIL?
SA PAWNSHOP!

Keithley's 'Lipa' is a spiritual classic

By Ronald G. Mangubat

KEITHLEY. Objective study of religious phenomena.

IT has been 12 years since its first publication, but June Keithley's "Lipa" (Cacho Publishing House, 1992, 220 pp) continues to be an enduring piece of investigative report on Marian apparitions.

Shower of petals

Containing the original account of the events at Lipa Carmel in 1948 by Mother Mary Cecilia of Jesus, O.C.D., the book chronicles significant episodes in the life of the visionary, Teresita "Teresing" Castillo, who claimed to have been visited by Mary, whose mysterious shower of petals remains one of the most controversial phenomena in recent local history.

Keithley describes the story of Lipa as "the stuff Filipino movies are made of . . . complete with our love for melodrama, for whimsical turns of plot."

However, there is nothing melodramatic about Keithley's reportage. Hers is an objective, sober study of the phenomena.

Keithley finds parallels between the events of Lipa and the other Marian apparitions that occurred in different parts of the world. For example, Castillo's obeying the request to kiss the ground and eat the grass is similar to the order given to Bernadette at Lourdes.

Dominant themes

She also mentions the dominant themes of the messages in the apparitions at Fatima, Hungary, Spain, Garabandal and Medjugorje.

The second part of the book deals with the answers to the question: Why has the phenomenon at Lipa Carmel become a vague memory today, and was once even dismissed as a hoax?

Keithley describes how some opportunists cashed in on the events at Lipa and made the whole phenomenon an avenue for commercialism.

Controversial events

In the meantime, Teresing Castillo, who left the nunnery after the controversial events, never married but adopted a daughter.

As an investigative report, Keithley's objective account satiates the reader's probing mind. Her book is a spiritual classic because, whether you believe in the Virgin Mary or not, reading "Lipa" will make you reflect on your own personal and spiritual convictions.

'Scooby-Doo 2' . . .

From page E1

number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Monday by Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. and Nielsen EDI Inc. are:

1. "Scooby Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed," Warner Bros., $29,438,331, 3,312 locations, $8,888 average, $29,438,331, one week.
2. "The Ladykillers," Disney, $12,634,563, 1,583 locations, $7,981 average, $12,634,563, one week.
3. "The Passion of the Christ," Newmarket, $12,593,974, 3,214 locations, $3,918 average, $315,152,778, five weeks.
4. "Dawn of the Dead," Universal, $10,675,945, 2,748 locations, $3,885 average, $44,220,945, two weeks.
5. "Jersey Girl," Miramax, $8,319,171, 1,520 locations, $5,473 average, $8,319,171, one week.
6. "Taking Lives," Warner Bros., $6,557,426, 2,705 locations, $2,424 average, $21,717,105, two weeks.
7. "Starsky & Hutch," Warner Bros., $6,212,223, 2,985 locations, $2,081 average, $76,821,982, four weeks.
8. "Hidalgo," Disney, $5,336,874, 2,667 locations, $2,001 average, $56,428,037, four weeks.
9. "Secret Window," Sony, $5,314,008, 2,912 locations, $1,825 average, $40,570,505, three weeks.
10. "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," Focus Features, $5,256,206, 1,357 locations, $3,873 average, $16,551,047, two weeks. *AP*

Boosting Philippine theater through initiatives for children

By Nestor U. Torre

(Conclusion)

TOMMY Abuel has appeared in more than his share of important theater productions, but he feels most useful and fulfilled when he's acting for young audiences.

There's something really exciting about a theater show's power to inspire and transform young people, either as actors or as members of the audience.

It won't happen overnight, of course, but we must all start to give theater for young audiences the importance and focus it deserves—not only to excite and inspire the youth today, but to build the enthusiastic audience we need for theater to truly thrive in this country for years to come.

Original Filipino musicals

In this connection, we're happy to hear that, this November, the Cultural Center of the Philippines is staging a festival of original Filipino musicals, with a specific focus on children's musicals. Theater groups are urged to come up with new musicals on a variety of stories and themes of particular interest to young audiences.

This dovetails quite nicely with one of the thrusts we have been suggesting to the CCP, to start strong initiatives in children's theater as a long-range move to build up theater attendance in this country.

Festival

Also note that, this summer, the CCP is holding a workshop on the production of original stage musicals, which we hope members of theater groups will take to prepare themselves for the CCP musical festival this November.

Even from a "commercial" point of view, it makes sense to go into children's theater, because it's a good way to fill all those seats in our theaters. If you have children in your play's cast, their entire families—and even clans!—will make it a point to catch your show.

And even if the children are only in the audience, each child will probably be accompanied by at least one adult, so that's double your usual audience right there!

Of course, producers of plays for children should be impelled by more than just the profit motive. Theater is a great way to develop children's imagination, sense of wonder, empathy and appreciation for positive values.

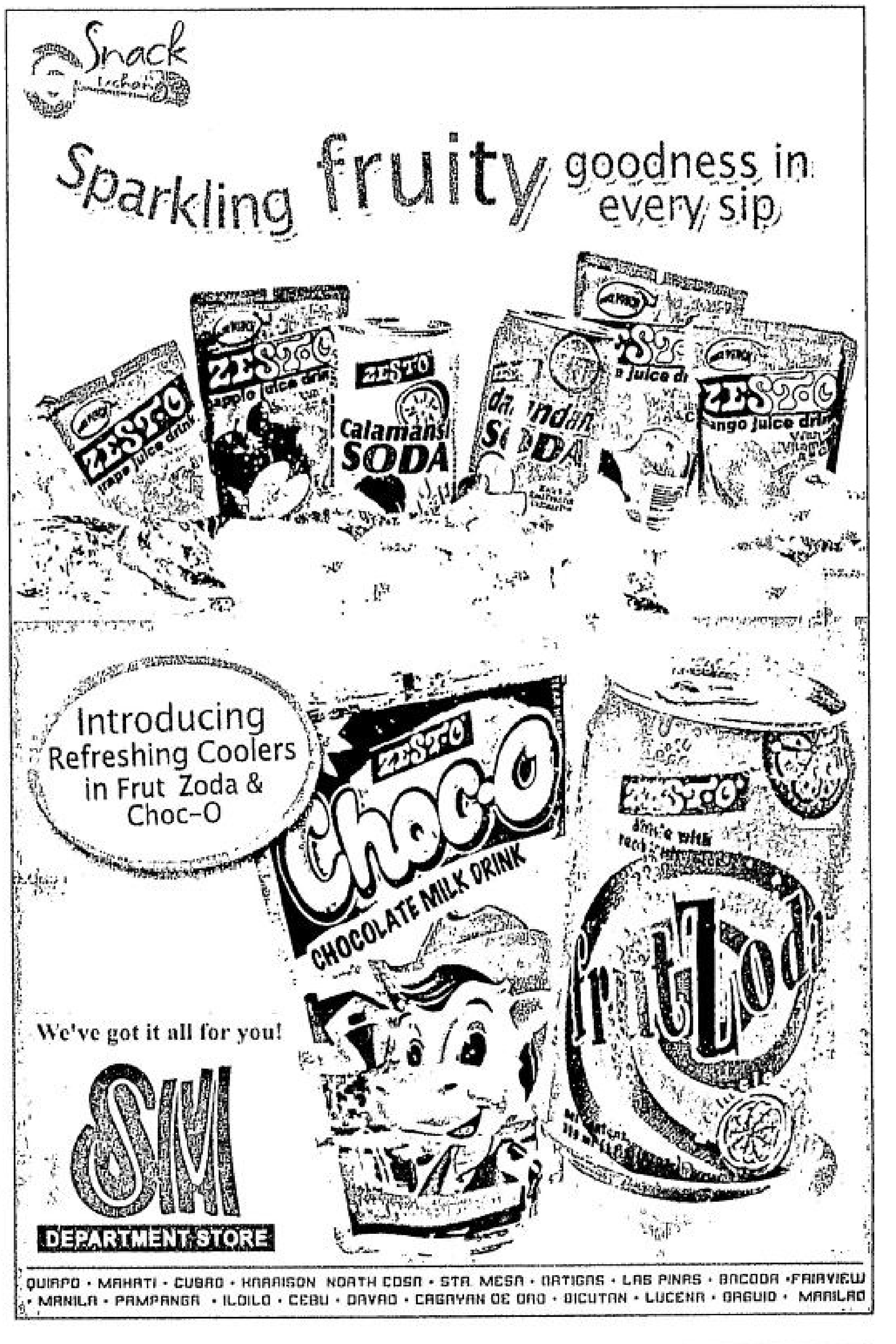
Used properly and creatively, children's theater can be a great adjunct to formal education.

Literary classics

In fact, many literature subjects can be made more interesting and dynamic for young viewers if literary classics are staged for an audience of students.

If children are trained to come up with stage presentations of their own, their appreciation for the arts in general will flourish. Not only will they learn how to write, act and direct, but their sense of design, lighting, music and communication will also be heightened.

We hope that the Department of Education will opt to use children's theater in a more dynamic way this coming school year. It will go a long way in making arts education truly exciting and creative in this country.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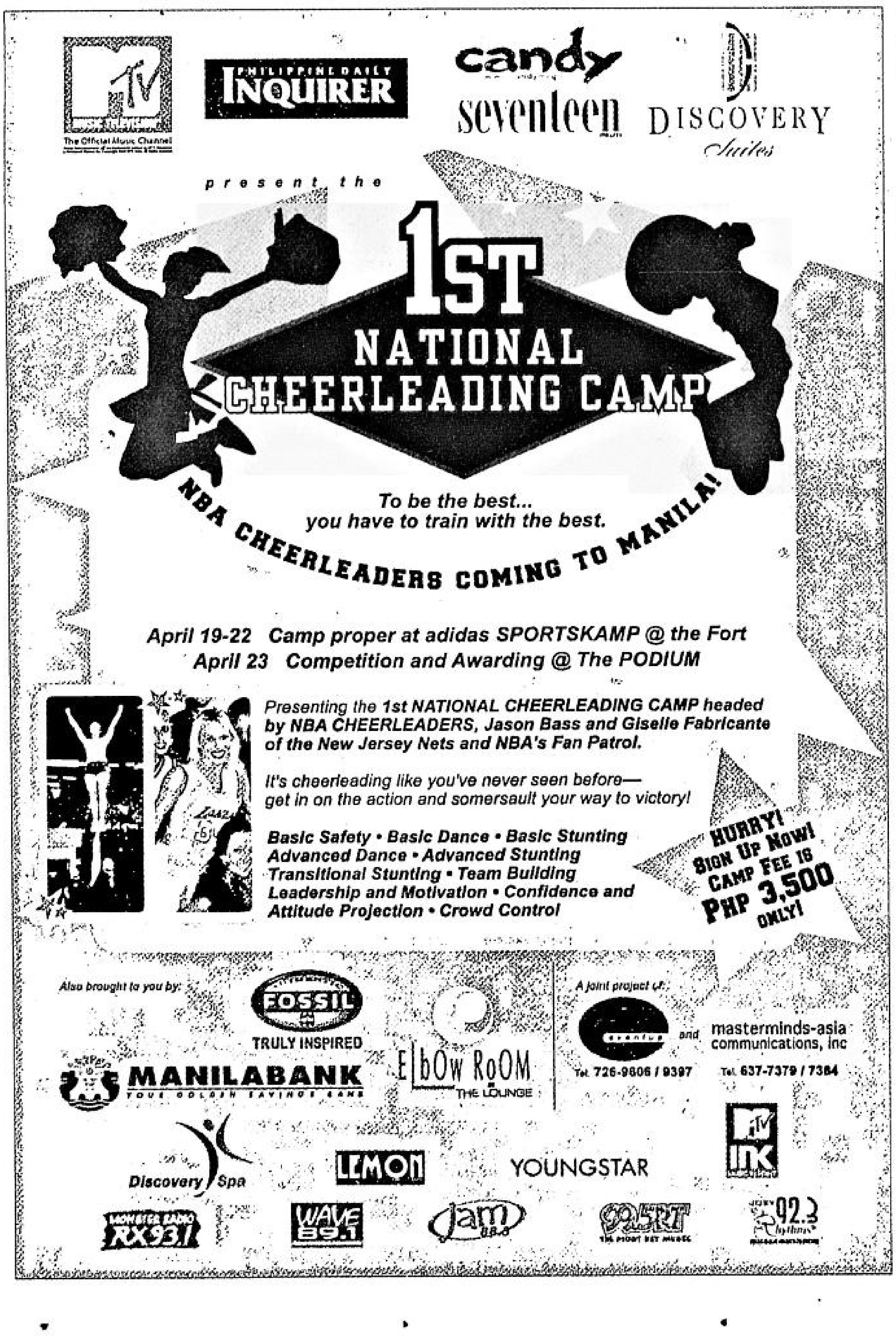
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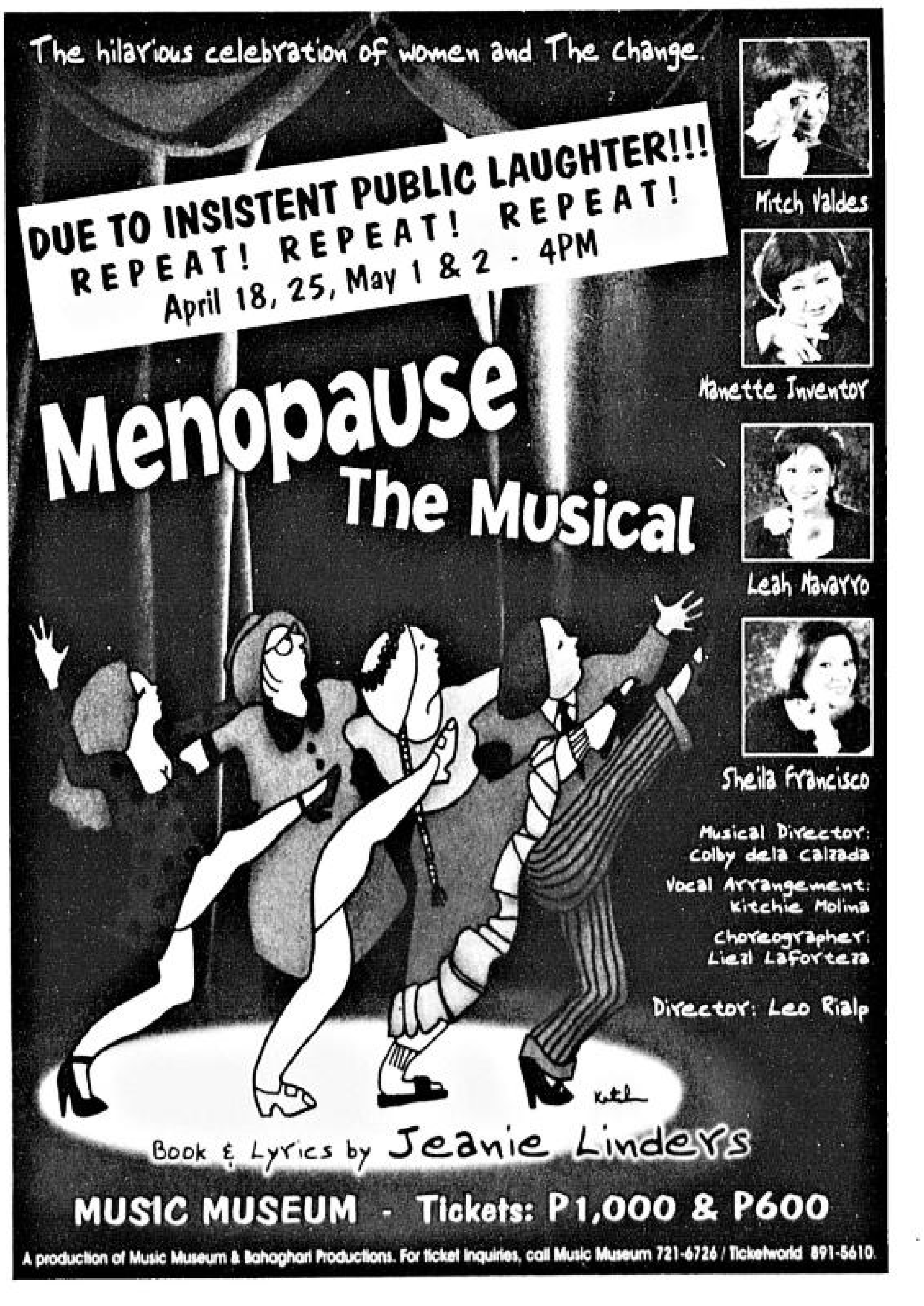
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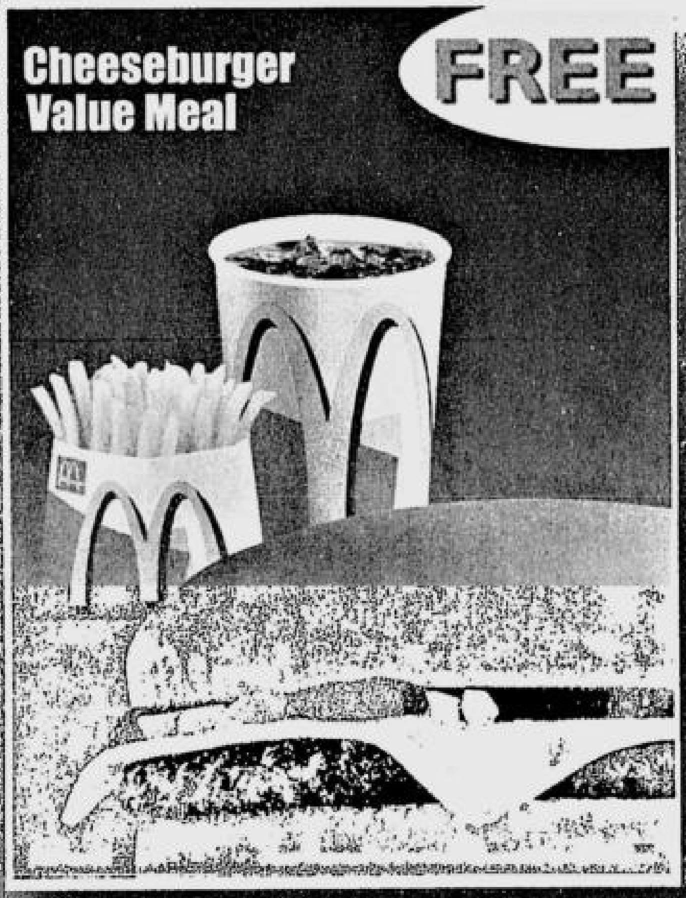

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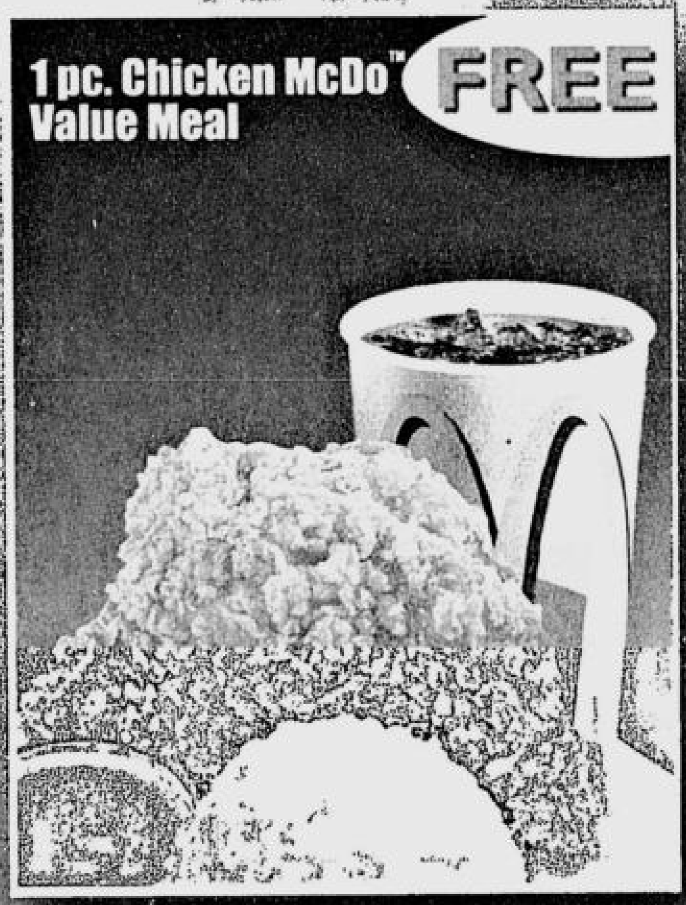

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4. Proceed to the McDonald's counter to claim your free value meal.
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SATURDAY *Special*

'Spider-Man 2' picks up pace with June 30 debut

LAS VEGAS—Feel that prickly sensation on the back of your neck? It must be your spider sense telling you the year's hottest sequel is arriving sooner than expected.

"Spider-Man 2" will hit theaters in the United States on June 30, two days earlier than scheduled, said Jeff Blake, vice chairman of Sony Studios.

That gives the movie a two-day head start on the Fourth of July holiday weekend, one of the busiest times of the year at US theaters.

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Good news

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Even in a summer packed with such likely blockbusters as "Shrek 2" and "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban," "Spider-Man 2" is the season's most-awaited adventure and stands the best chance of passing $300 million megahit "The Passion of the Christ" to become this year's biggest moneymaker.

Enormous success

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That seems a safe bet, based on theater owners' hearty cheers and applause for footage of "Spider-Man 2" that Sony recently previewed. The studio showed the final theatrical trailer, which debuts in theaters on April 9, plus an extended action sequence in which Spider-Man battles multi-tentacled villain Doc Ock (Alfred Molina) on a speeding mass-transit train.

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Steep drop

Even with many of the visual effects unfinished, the action sequence wowed the crowd. Shooting dozens of sinewy web strands, Spider-Man uses himself as a living brake pad to slow down the train before it plummets off a steep drop at the end of the rail tracks.

Fainting from the exertion, Spider-Man begins toppling off the edge himself, when the hands of commuters he's saved reach out from inside the train to pull him to safety, passing his limp body overhead and setting him down tenderly.

When our hero regains consciousness, a boy on the train tells him, "It's good to have you back, Spider-Man!" *AP*

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 1334. Series of 2004.

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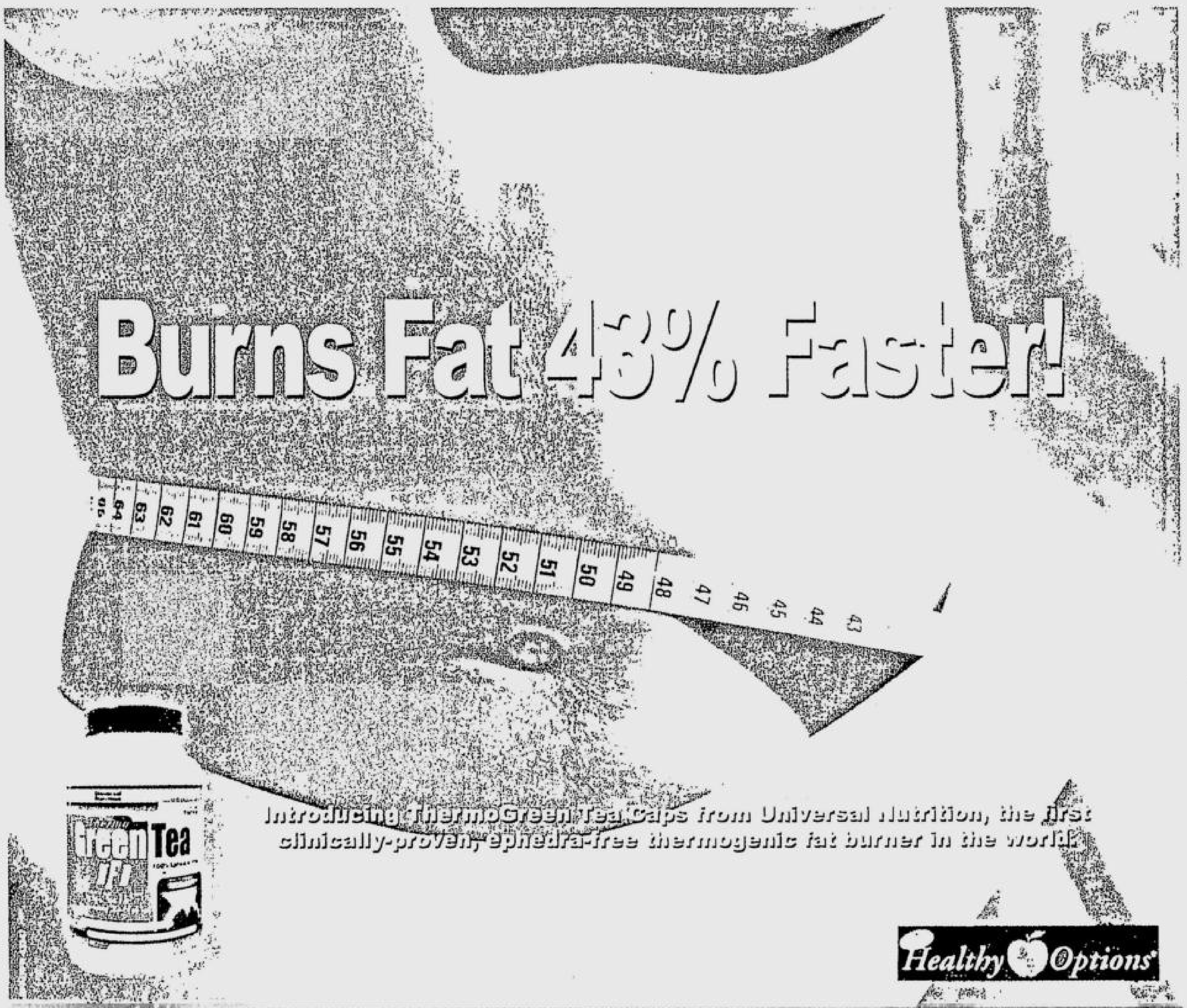

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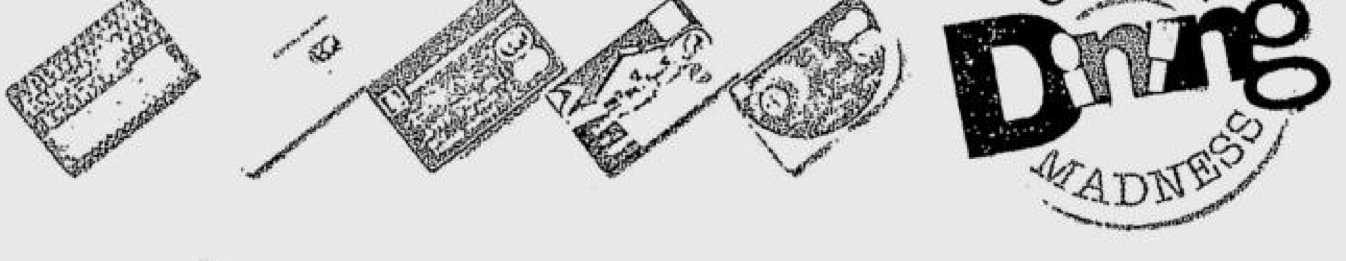

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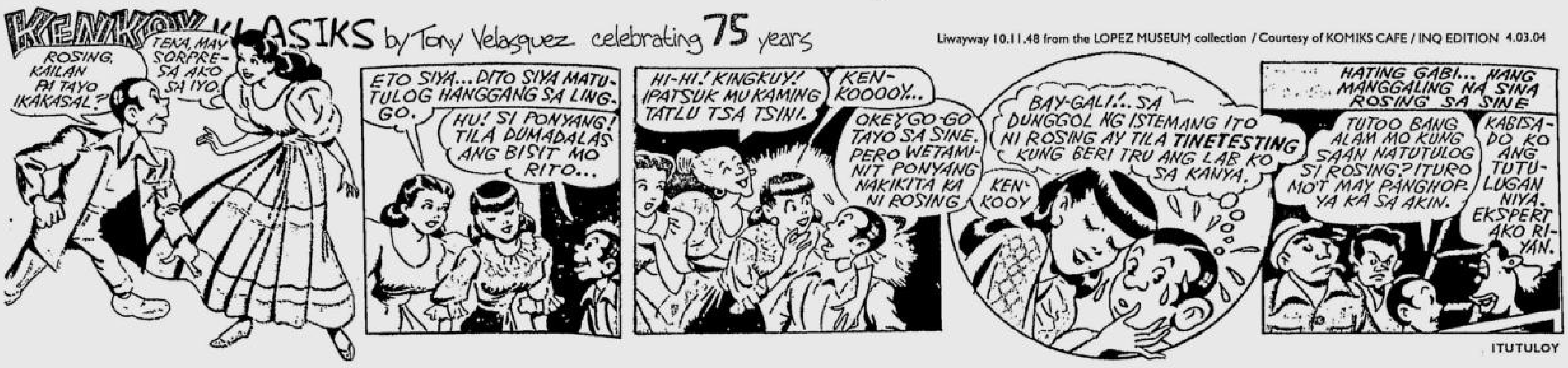
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ITUTULOY

Fox finds normalcy despite illness

By Nestor U. Torre

FOX. Appealing and empathetic persona.

SOME years ago, popular actor Michael J. Fox stunned his fans when he announced that he was putting his show biz career on hold to concentrate on fighting Parkinson's disease. Unknown to many, he had been stricken with the incurable degenerative neurological disorder since 1991—at the very zenith of his stellar career.

Hit sitcom

After going public about his illness in 1998, Fox resigned from his hit sitcom, "Spin City," and put up his own foundation for research into Parkinson's disease, to help millions of other people suffering from the disorder.

The disease generates symptoms like rigidity, loss of balance, tremors and diminished motor coordination, which inhibit many people from remaining active, giving members of society.

But Fox refused to be defeated and religiously took his medication so that he could continue to work to increase public awareness of the disease, and raise funds to combat it.

TV shows

Recently, Fox agreed to act in a few TV shows, a sign that he's trying even harder to live a normal life despite his disorder.

And yet, he knows fully well that he has a continually degenerative condition, so he isn't expecting a happy ending to his problem on the short term. But he feels gratified that his efforts in the past few years have energized research to find a cure for Parkinson's disease, from which many sufferers will eventually benefit.

Beyond the specific context of Parkinson's disease, Fox has also inspired many people facing other problems. Seeing him cope so bravely and creatively with his, they find hope and strength to get a handle on their own lives, and whatever it is that has been getting them down.

Role model

Fox's cachet as a role model is derived from his appealing and empathetic persona. A genuinely good person onscreen and off, show biz success came easy to him ever since 1982, when he auditioned for the sitcom, "Family Ties."

In only a couple of years, it was the No. 2 TV show in the country, and Fox's movies, like "Back to the Future" and "Teen Wolf," were also certified blockbusters.

Thus, at only 24 years of age, Fox was hailed as Hollywood's new Boy Wonder. *(To be concluded)*

CCP playwriting workshop starts April 13

FROM April 13 to May 8. award-winning writer-director Nestor U. Torre holds the Playwright Development Initiative as one of the summer workshop offerings of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The course is deemed unusually significant because it focuses, not only on the writing of scripts, but also on their rehearsal and staging, with illuminating inputs coming from directors, actors and members of the audience.

MONTAGE

The benefits to the playwrights are substantial, but workshoppers are expected to be committed and hardworking throughout the course, which will be held from 9 a.m., to 6 p.m. from Tuesday to Saturday. Call the CCP's Performing Arts Department (832-3415) or Jeanne Lim at 416-3479 and (0919) 333-8386.

MTV Debit Card raffle winners announced

Ten winners of the MTV Debit Card raffle were recently awarded Casio EX-MZ Digital Cameras with MP3 function.

They were Joyce Kristel Casela of Makati CIty, Marie Ross Sembrano of Mandaue City, Topeng Francisco of Manila, Elgin Balmeo of Baguio City, Nherissa Ibuos of Manila, Maricon Imperial of Pasig City, Louiseyella Estrella of Manila, Roselle Bagsic of Cavite, Cherie Mae Lago of Cebu City and Eliza Enriquez of Pasay City.

Twenty other cardholders each won P5,000 worth of MTV Debit Card credit.

VELOSO (right) directs Richard Signey in "Ang Martir sa Golgotha."

The MTV Debit Card can be used to make purchases not only in the Philippines but abroad as well, since it is a Visa Electron co-branded card between MTV and Equitable Card. It doubles as an ATM Card, and is also available as a prepaid card (E-Card XP) at Equitable PCIBank branches in the Greater Manila Area, Cebu and Baguio.

Movies on TV

On HBO, April 3 at 9 p.m., "Orange County." April 4 at 8 p.m., "A.I., Artificial Intelligence." April 5 at 9 p.m., "The Time Machine." April 6 at 8:30 p.m., "The Laramie Project." April 7 at 9 p.m., "Vanilla Sky." April 8 at 11:30 a.m., "Black Beauty." April 9 at 3 p.m., "I Am Sam."

On Cinemax, April 3 at 1:30 p.m., "Peggy Sue Got Married." April 4 at 10:45 a.m., "Batman Returns." April 5 at 9 p.m., "Hitler: The Rise of Evil," Parts 1 and 2. April 6 at 9 p.m., "Enemy at the Gates." April 7 at 9 a.m., "Thoroughly Modern Millie." April 8 at 5 p.m., "Cape Fear." April 9 at 12:15 p.m., "Boys on the Side."

'Martir sa Golgotha'

Manila councilor and veteran theater talent Lou Veloso directs the passion play, "Martir sa Golgotha," which will be presented by Tanghalang Sta. Ana in various localities in Manila's sixth district.

The passion play topbills Richard Signey and Alma Concepcion, and will be performed at 7:30 p.m. on April 5 at St. Jude Parish, San Miguel; April 6 at Munting Isla, V. Mapa ext., Sta. Mesa; April 7 at Plaza Hugo, Sta. Ana; April 8 at Mabolo Basketball Court, Obesis st., Pandacan; and April 9 at J. Posadas, Punta, Sta. Ana. Call 564-4365.

Veloso, best remembered as TV's Mr. Truman, has organized community theater to bring the arts to the people, providing an alternative to harmful activities that victimize the youth. Aspiring for a congressional seat this year, he has put up an intimate all-purpose venue in Sta. Ana that serves as theater, workshop area and art gallery.

Now showing

By Rito P. Asilo

THIS week, Mel Gibson and Jim Caviezel square off against Gael Garcia Bernal and Penelope Cruz, a pre-"West Wing" Rob Lowe, and an island full of flesh-eating zombies. Choose the film(s) you want to see:

"The Passion of the Christ"
D: Mel Gibson
S: Jim Caviezel, Maia Morgenstern, Monica Bellucci

Mel Gibson puts his money where his faith is in this controversial, hugely affecting and graphically violent depiction of Jesus Christ's last 12 hours. This film is alternately regarded as a highly effective evangelizing tool —or an ultra-sadistic bloodbath. Touching flashbacks provide some tender moments.

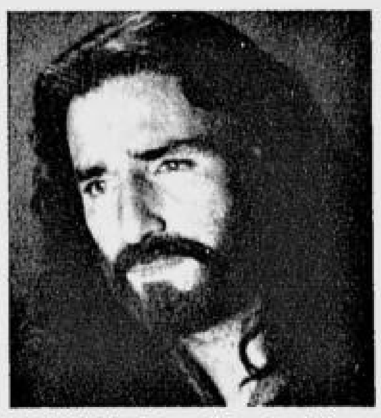
Although not without flaws, the movie is a must-see for its technical excellence, award-worthy performances (especially from Caviezel and Morgenstern, as Mary) and for its refreshingly irreverent, exhilaratingly unconventional take on Christ's Passion.

"Don't Tempt Me"
D: Agustin Diaz Yanes
C: Penelope Cruz, Gael Garcia Bernal

The *other* must-see movie of the week tells the story of a misogynistic boxer (Demian Bichir) whose soul is being contested by angels from Heaven (Victoria Abril and Fanny Ardant) and Hell (a feisty Cruz in top acting form and a scene-stealing Gael Garcia Bernal), at a time when God is apparently *in absentia*—thus the other title, "No News From God."

Hilarious, imaginative and intriguing, the plot twists of this entertaining Goya-nominated film may sometimes feel kooky and campy, but the movie manages to continually engage our interest with its visual sophistication and catechetical, philosophical musings.

BERNAL. Scene-stealing performance.


CAVIEZEL. Paces "Passion's" terrific cast.

Check out a scene at the "Gateway to Hell: the Southern Zone," where notorious historical figures, including a Maria Clara-wearing *Pinoy* icon, are welcomed to the "underworld." Don't miss this one!

"Hostile Intent"
D: Jonathan Heap
C: Rob Lowe, John Savage, Saul Rubinek

Is it safe for tech-geeks to go camping in the woods? Ask Rob Lowe, who plays an ex-hacker who creates a non-hackable, privacy shield computer chip that can keep the government from gaining access into computer files.

Shot in 1997, two years before Lowe had successfully revived his career (via "The West Wing") after his infamous video scandal, this incoherent, poorly shot B-action movie follows the deadly cat-and-mouse chase between the geeks and the goons. We're glad Lowe has since emerged from the rut!

"The House of the Dead"
D: Uwe Boll
C: Jonathan Cherry, Tyron Leitso, Jurgen Prochnow

A rip-off of George Romero's 1968 zombie classic, "Night of the Living Dead," Boll's unimaginative screamfest, which is based on a Sega video game, brings a group of fun-seeking college types to an island called Isla dela Muerte (go figure) to attend a rave party.

After finding a suspiciously empty party scene, they realize that the island is inhabited by pale-skinned creatures and hungry-looking zombies whose secrets lie hidden inside the creepy, rickety "House of the Dead." —More ho-hum than eek!

Controversial stars top Peta's worst dressed . . .

From page F4

mothballed with your fading star.

- **Lara Flynn Boyle.** It likely takes just a fox-and-a-half to cover this incredible shrinking actor, so Peta ranks her last for having caused the fewest animals to be drowned and strangled for her coats.

One fur-wearer who is notably absent from Peta's list this year is Liza Minnelli, who took top dishonors in 2003.

Last week, she told Peta that she prefers *faux* fur and blamed pretentious ex-hubby David Gest for making her wear the real thing.

In good faith, Peta has sent her a *faux* fur, but she remains on Peta probation.

Visit Peta's website www.furisdead.com.

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM APRIL 3 - APRIL 7

CH	2	4	[illegible]	[illegible]	9	13	23	25	[illegible]
[illegible]	6 00 Star in A Million 6 30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 8 30 Home Along da Airport 9 00 Victim 9 30 Buttercup 10 30 Kontrobersyal 11 30 "F" 12 00 Sports Unlimited	6 00 National Geographic 7 00 Yan Ang Pinoy 8.00 Search for the 1st Tanduay Billiards Player	5 30 PBA Games 9 00 Sing Galing 10 00 Lenie 11 00 Musical Specials	6 00 Starstruck Kids 7 00 Imbestigador 8 00 Idol Ko Si Kap 9 30 Kakabakaba Adventures 10 30 Celebrity Turns 11.30 Master Showman	6 00 Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo 7 00 7 Days 8 00 John Doe 9 00 Saturday Night Playhouse 11.00 PGMA	6 00 Opinyon at Desisyon 7 00 Bitag 7 30 9-Ball Tirador 9 00 Nina 10 00 String of Hearts 11 00 Iyo ang Katarungan	6 00 Baywatch 7 00 Game Plan 7 30 The Amazing Race 8 30 Boston Public 9 30 Studio 23 Presents 11 30 Reel Deel	6 00 Agila Reports 6 30 Screen Savers 7 30 Euromaxx 8 00 Car Guys 8 30 DWTV Journal 9 00 Ang Tamang Daan 10.00 Pasugo	6 00 RJ Music Videos 9 00 Music Videos 10 00 Music Videos 11 00 Music Videos
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By Noelani Torre

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Their newest release, "Greatest Hits" (Warner), has revived our interest, however. The collection reminds us why the Peppers have become one of the biggest bands in the last 10 years.

14 tracks

Comprised of 14 tracks, "Greatest Hits" is a good reintroduction to the Peppers' distinctive funk-rock sound. More serious fans will probably find the track list predictable, made up as it is of songs that have enjoyed a great deal of airtime, but the two new tracks might prove attractive to hardcore fans who already own most records.

This being a Warner Bros. production, however, you'll only get one song from their EMI days—"Higher Ground," from 1989's "Mother's Milk"—the rest of the selection having been culled mostly from BSSM and 1999's "Californication."

This doesn't make for a comprehensive representation of the band's music—we don't hear anything from their funkier, rougher earlier albums, but then again, this is a greater hits collection, not a retrospective, and the group only managed to break through to the hit-making mainstream with "Mother's Milk."

The two new tracks, "Fortune Faded" and "Save the Population," give us a glimpse of future developments in the Red Hot Chili Peppers' constantly evolving sound.

Vocalist

The band is made up of vocalist Anthony Kiedis, bassist Michael Balzary (popularly known as "Flea"), guitarist John Frusciante, and drummer Chad Smith. The first two are the band's core members.

Slovak's death from heroin overdose in 1988 shook the band up (he was, in Flea's words, a "beloved friend") and resulted in Irons' taking a hiatus from the music scene.

Irons was replaced by Smith, and Frusciante took Slovak's place in time to record "Mother's Milk," which earned the group its first gold.

Frusciante's presence seemed to be the catalyst needed for the band's success, and his leaving the group in 1993 was a low point for the Peppers. He was replaced by former Porno for Pyros and Jane's Addiction's guitarist Dave Navarro, and the band went on to record "One Hot Minute."

Addiction

After recovering from his heroin addiction, Frusciante returned to the Peppers' fold in 1998.

One year later, they released the widely popular "Californication," whose multi-platinum hits, "Californication" and "Scar Tissue," are included in the collection.

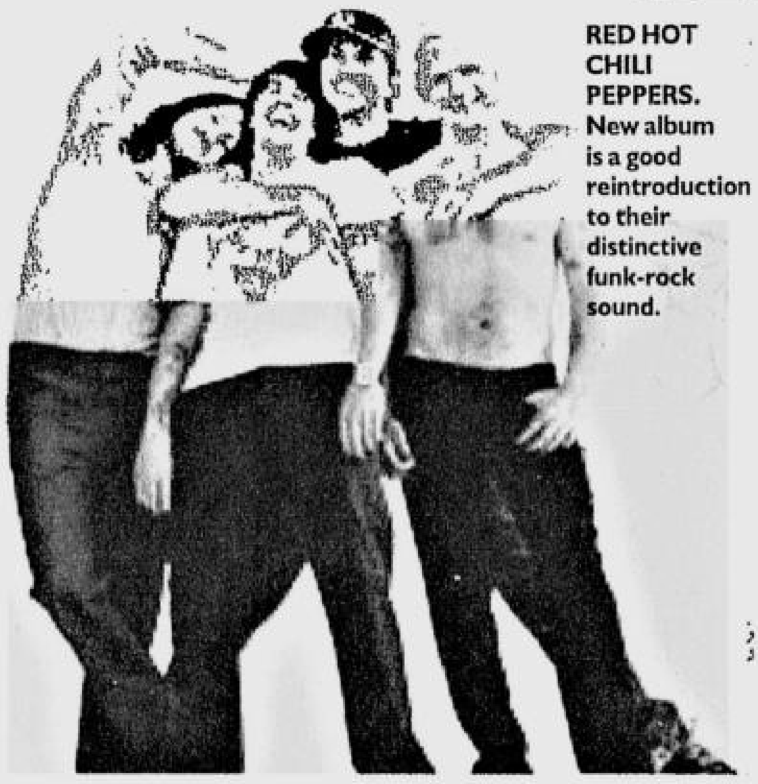
Songs from "Blood Sugar Sex Magik" are "Under the Bridge" (which has spawned several covers, including one by All Saints that made most Peppers fans wince), "Give It Away," "Suck My Kiss," and "Breaking the Girl."

Songs from 2002's "By the Way" are "Universally Speaking" and "By the Way." Also included in the collection is "Soul to Squeeze," the hit from the 1993 "Coneheads" soundtrack.

Purists

The band has often been accused of being a sell-out by so-called purists as its music seems to have smoothed out its rough edges and become more melodic through the years, but we don't agree.

As this collection illustrates, the Peppers' sound has never stayed in one place for long, and as the group gets older, their music also takes a more introspective direction.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS. New album is a good reintroduction to their distinctive funk-rock sound.

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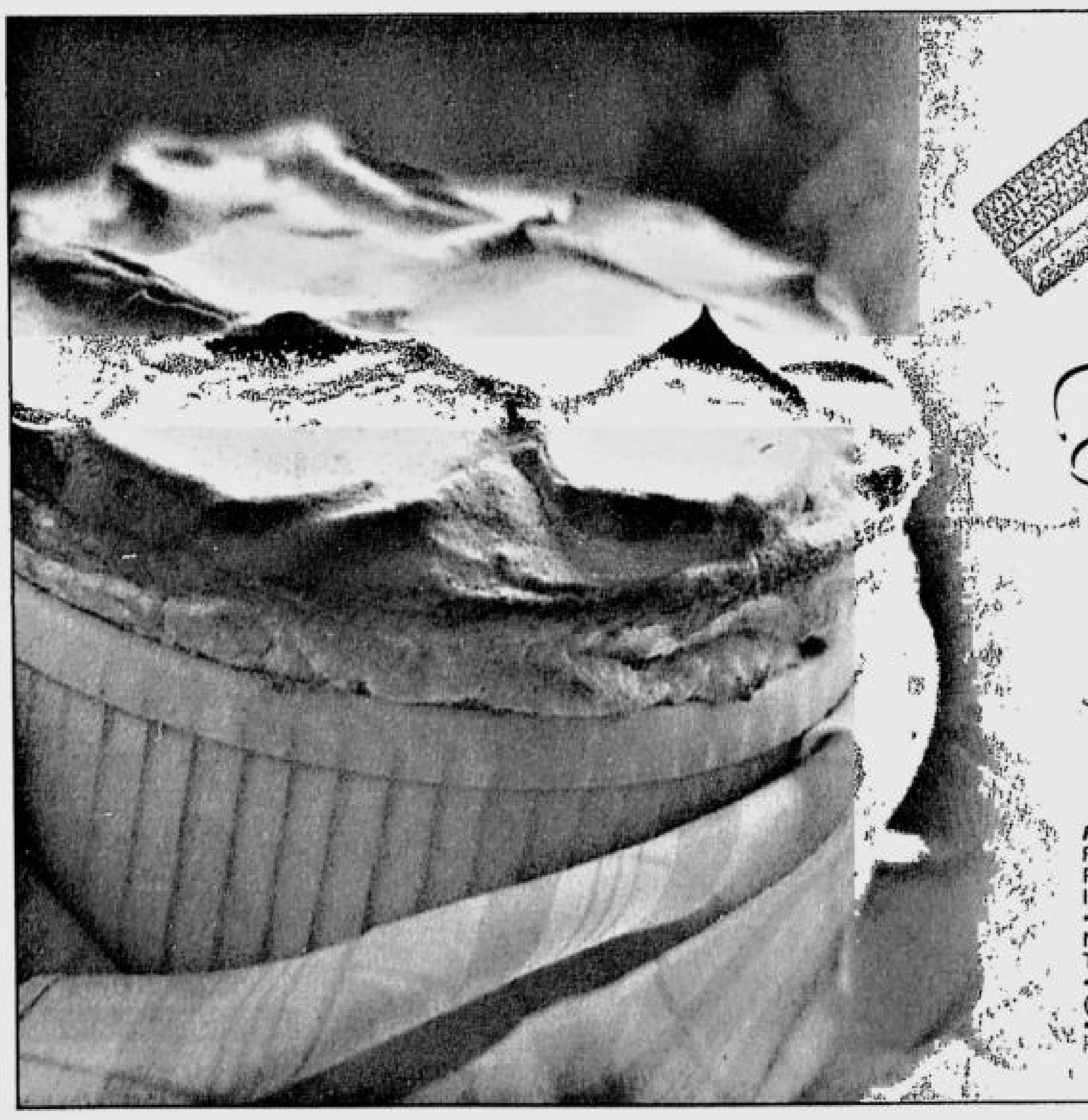

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This being a Warner Bros. production, however, you'll only get one song from their EMI days—"Higher Ground," from 1989's "Mother's Milk"—the rest of the selection having been culled mostly from BSSM and 1999's "Californication."

This doesn't make for a comprehensive representation of the band's music—we don't hear anything from their funkier, rougher earlier albums, but then again, this is a greater hits collection, not a retrospective, and the group only managed to break through to the hit-making mainstream with "Mother's Milk."

The two new tracks, "Fortune Faded" and "Save the Population," give us a glimpse of future developments in the Red Hot Chili Peppers' constantly evolving sound.

Vocalist

The band is made up of vocalist Anthony Kiedis, bassist Michael Balzary (popularly known as "Flea"), guitarist John Frusciante, and drummer Chad Smith. The first two are the band's core members.

Slovak's death from heroin overdose in 1988 shook the band up (he was, in Flea's words, a "beloved friend") and resulted in Irons' taking a hiatus from the music scene.

Irons was replaced by Smith, and Frusciante took Slovak's place in time to record "Mother's Milk," which earned the group its first gold.

Frusciante's presence seemed to be the catalyst needed for the band's success, and his leaving the group in 1993 was a low point for the Peppers. He was replaced by former Porno for Pyros and Jane's Addiction's guitarist Dave Navarro, and the band went on to record "One Hot Minute."

Addiction

After recovering from his heroin addiction, Frusciante returned to the Peppers' fold in 1998.

One year later, they released the widely popular "Californication," whose multi-platinum hits, "Californication" and "Scar Tissue," are included in the collection.

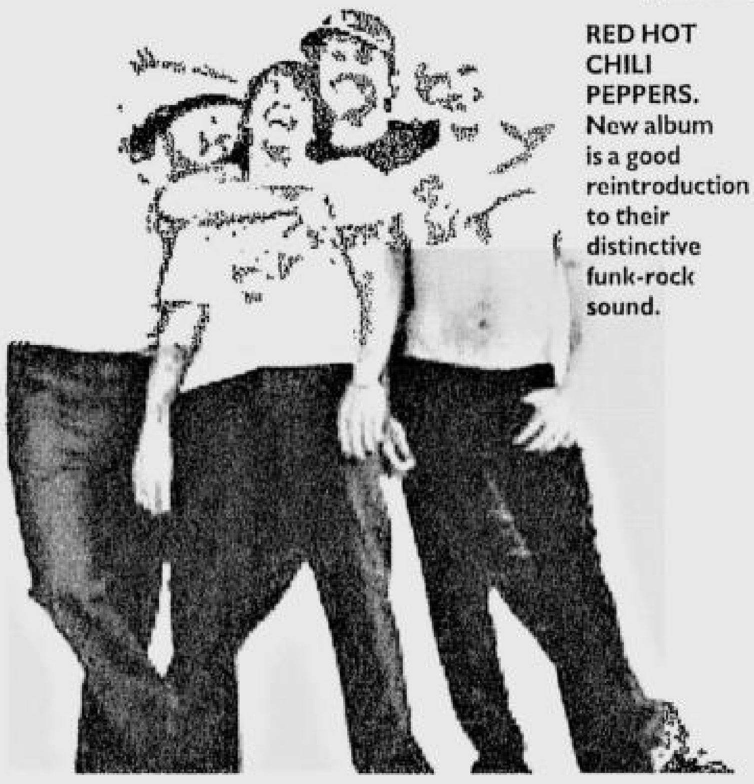
Songs from "Blood Sugar Sex Magik" are "Under the Bridge" (which has spawned several covers, including one by All Saints that made most Peppers fans wince), "Give It Away," "Suck My Kiss," and "Breaking the Girl."

Songs from 2002's "By the Way" are "Universally Speaking" and "By the Way." Also included in the collection is "Soul to Squeeze," the hit from the 1993 "Coneheads" soundtrack.

Purists

The band has often been accused of being a sell-out by so-called purists as its music seems to have smoothed out its rough edges and become more melodic through the years, but we don't agree.

As this collection illustrates, the Peppers' sound has never stayed in one place for long, and as the group gets older, their music also takes a more introspective direction.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS. New album is a good reintroduction to their distinctive funk-rock sound.

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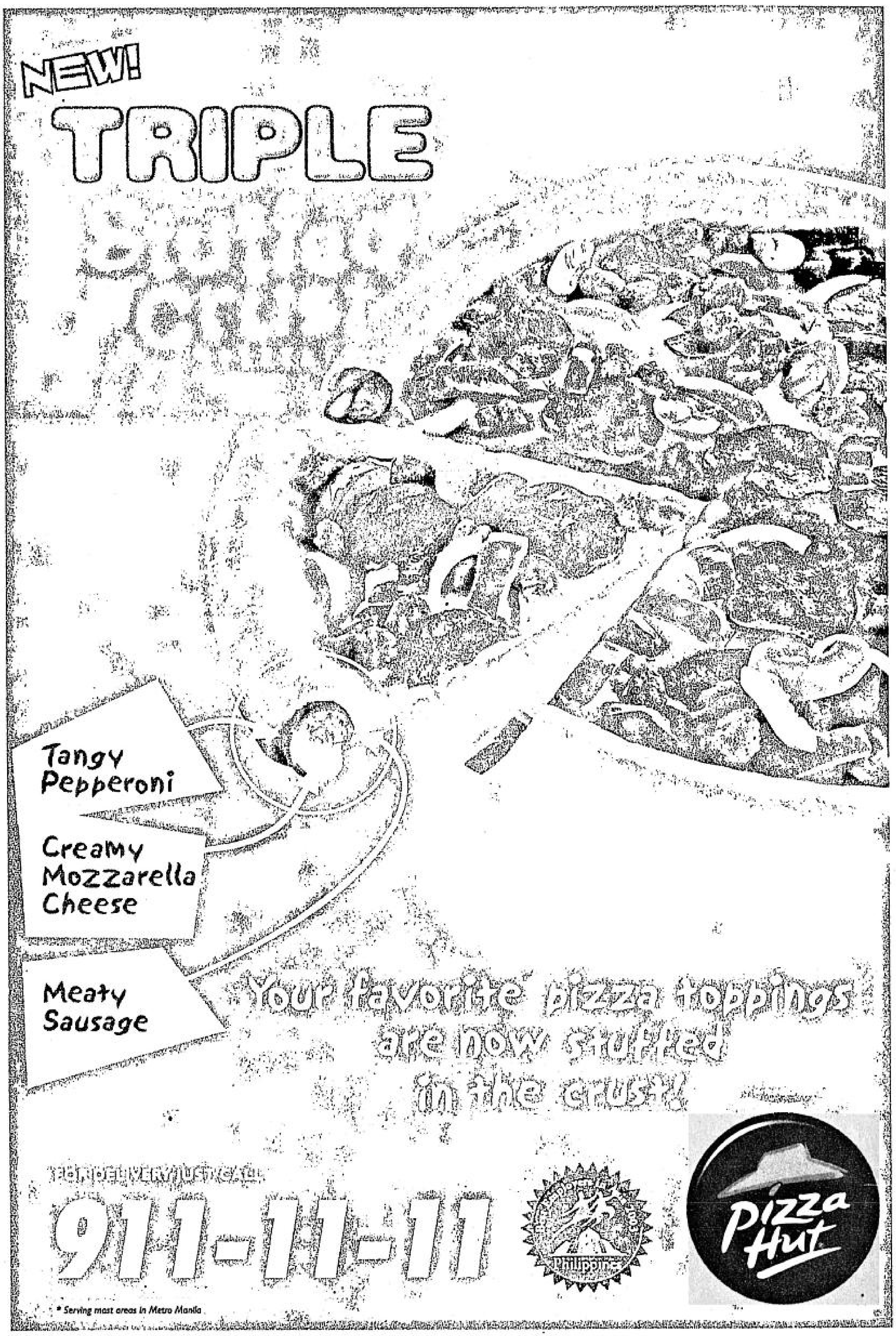
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Controversial stars top Peta's worst-dressed list

ROSS. Furry turn on the catwalk.

NEW YORK—Prison is never a "good thing," but it might give Martha Stewart and Diana Ross a taste of what it's like for animals given a life sentence without hope of parole on fur farms, says Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).

Wardrobes

The animal rights group has just named the convicted duo to the top spots on its annual "Worst-Dressed" list, which takes celebrities to task for dragging dead animals into their wardrobes.

Peta's "Worst-Dressed" of 2004 are:

- **Diana Ross.** The '60s sensation has now stooped to taking free fur for "modeling" for celebrity suck-up designer Dennis Basso.

But Peta opted not to protest Diana's furry turn on the catwalk, thinking that she might not be able to walk a straight line, anyway.

Peta hopes that once she's behind bars, Diana will give a thought to the minks who have committed no crime, yet get a death sentence on filthy fur farms.

- **Martha Stewart.** Martha won't get the electric chair, but the same can't be said for the *chinchillas* who were genitally electrocuted just so she could wear a frumpy scarf on the day of her conviction.

Humane lifestyle

Peta hopes that her daughter, who is an ethical vegetarian, will help Martha make the switch to a more humane lifestyle.

- **Kobe Bryant.** Probably never met a beaver he didn't want to take advantage of.
- **Donatella Versace.** Beauty isn't even skin-deep for this skin-swathed Cruella DeVil.
- **Celine Dion.** Near, far, wherever you are, your furs should be

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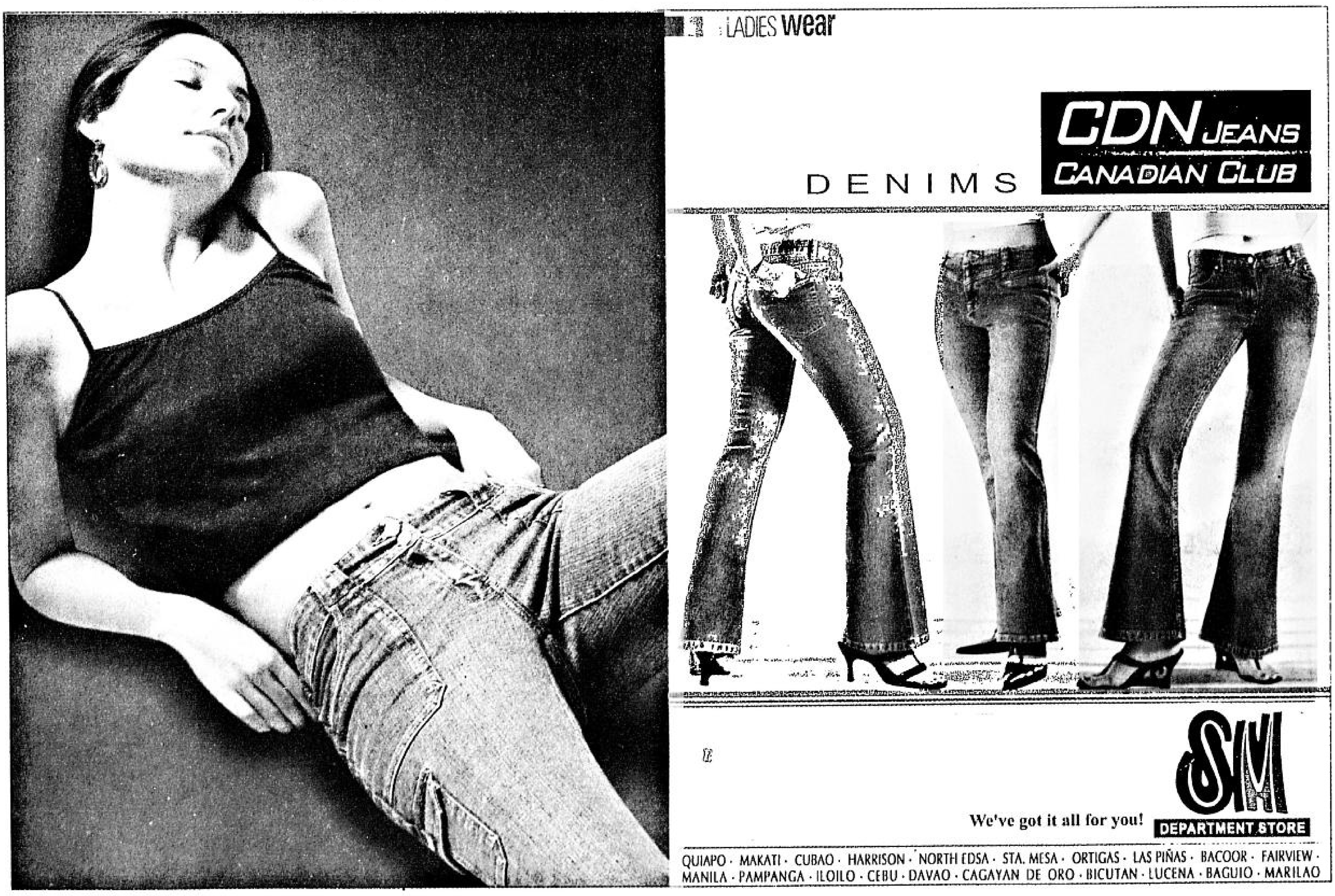
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Super!Countdown
37 days 'til the Vote!

SATURDAY Super
E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph
Contributing Editor **Pam Pastor**
Creative Director **Tim Yap**

serve
chilled

Tim Tayag topless! page G2

Amanda Griffin's animal amour page H1

Vicki Belo's Venus complex page I2

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Photo assistants: MARCUS MAGUIGAD
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Cover Star: AMANDA GRIFFIN

Moments in time

KULIT CO.

KC Concepcion

IT'S 4:37 .in the morning. Spring break ended just five days ago and here I am, kept wide awake by an enormous full moon beaming through the upstairs window. Times like these have the power to transform me into some romantic night owl. Nothing ordinary—a night owl wishing desperately to turn into Juliet Capulet, perched on her balcony, singing.

"Somewhere out there, beneath the pale moonlight, someone's thinking of me, and loving me tonight ..."

I was five years old when I declared my very first "theme song." That was when I was first taught how to make memories through music. Movie soundtracks are very useful for us Pinoys in defining stages of our lives—childhood, growing up, relationships.

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What do you do when you realize after whirlwinds of insanity that you just want to have the calm of security?

"One can never consent to creep when one feels the impulse to soar." — Helen Keller

When you want to drift back to the ground after a long breathtaking flight ... when after jumping off the plane you want to pull the string to slow down, will the chute still open for you?

'What would you attempt to do, if you knew you could not fail?" — Unknown

She liked chasing dragons
and today she sat on the rock
closed her eyes
inhaled the heavy air
and like fuel, she was set on fire.
Her head spun through colors
sounds
and smells.

"The aim of life is to live, and to live means to be aware. Joyously, drunkenly, serenely, divinely aware." — Henry Miller

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who threatened to take her soul.
She hid from the monsters
who sought to destroy her dreams
and danced away from phantoms
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"Life shrinks and expands in proportion to one's courage." — Anais Nin

Too scared?

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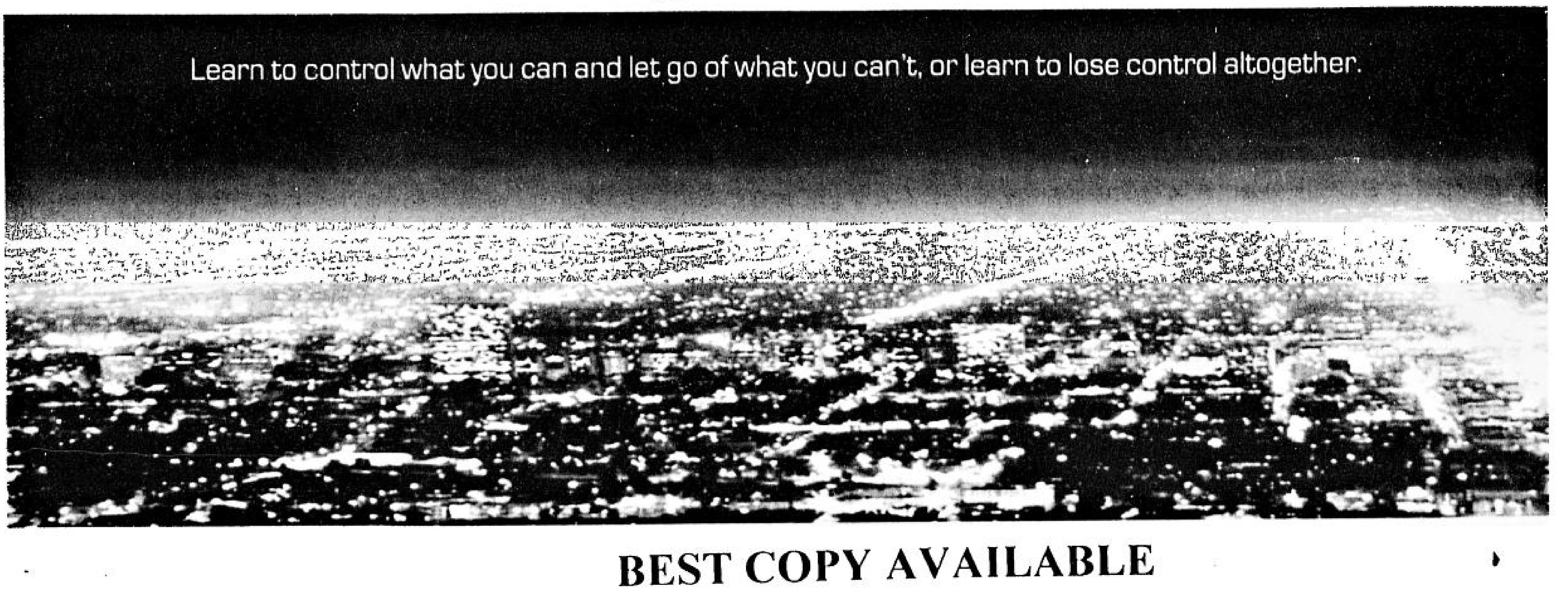
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Super! Countdown
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E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph
Contributing Editor **Pam Pastor**
Creative Director **Tim Yap**

serve
chilled

Tim Tayag page G2
topless!

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animal **amour** page H1

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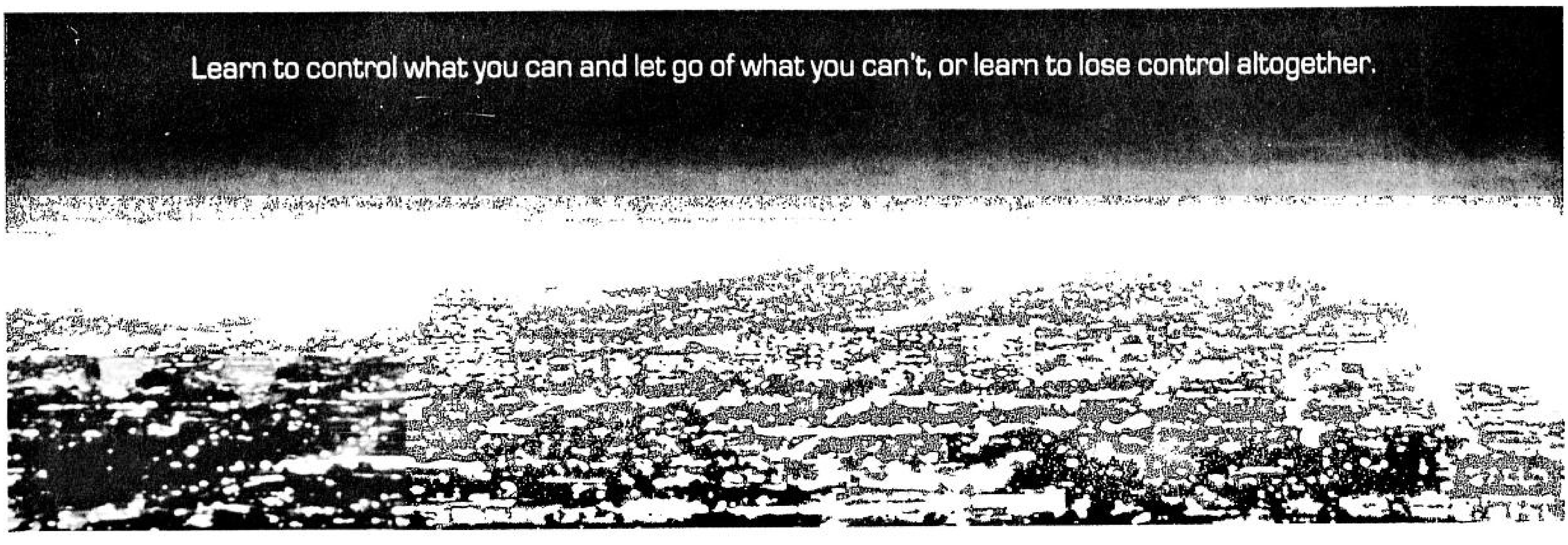
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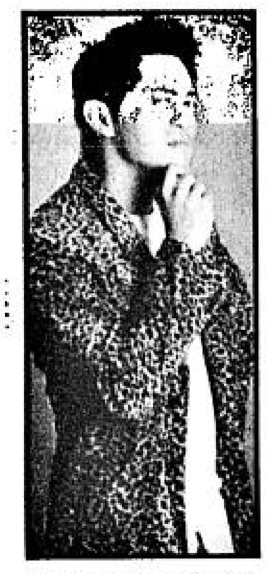
THE MIND OF TIM TAYAG

The wise guy cometh

'I've never stolen a joke from another comedian! I've stolen some from my mom, but she's not a comedian; she's decent'



I'M funny. Really, I am!

By Martin Valdes
Photos by Paolo Pineda
Grooming by Pazzy Navarro

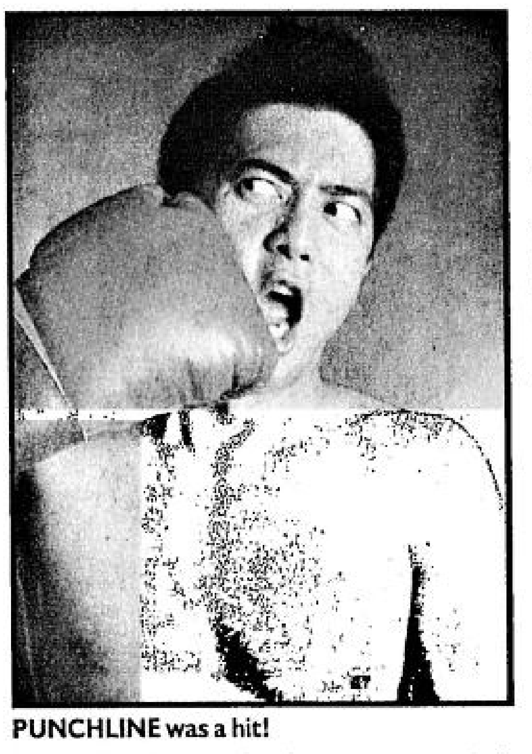
FRIEDRICH Nietzsche defined laughter as "taking mischievous delight in someone else's uneasiness, but with a good conscience." And we all know what an expert *he* was on comic relief. With chilling accuracy, the statement also describes Tim Tayag's kind of comedy.

A quick-witted gunslinger in search of a social conscience, Tim is fast developing a reputation as one of the country's hottest talents in the stand-up circuit. Rumors of an impending television show promise even more media exposure for the lyrical maverick. Super! took a chance and asked Tim several questions with absolutely no direction. Turns out, this lack of order suits him just fine.

Entertainment Weekly recently published its list of the 25 funniest characters in the comedy business. Why weren't you there?

I was in the final round of the audition for number one spot. The remaining contenders were Chris Rock and myself. Carrot Top had to pull out because of a prop injury and Paolo Santos, bless his acoustic soul, was taken out for aesthetic reasons. EW, as we call it in the industry, asked us for one last joke. Chris Rock pulled out his ace "black people are different from white people" and as usual, he killed. I had three options, my "knock-knock-who's-there-ako-mabawho," my "Kuya Germs is Gollum" bit, or my classic Pinoy humor routine, "someone switched the shampoo with glue while I was showering so now my hands are stuck to my head." As I executed the shampoo bit, I heard a loud gasp from the audience. Apparently, in the fine print, full frontal nudity was not allowed. I was disqualified on the spot and asked to vacate the premises. Hey how was I supposed to know?

You're among Manila's rising breed of comedians who offer "intelligent humor". Does this mean it works only on intelligent audiences?



PUNCHLINE was a hit!

You don't need to be intelligent to get my humor. You just need to have an open mind, 200 bucks for the entrance, and an intoxicated system. Just kidding. It's 250 bucks.

The last time I saw your show was at The Comfort Room in Makati. Tough crowd.

Yes, I remember. It was a private show for all my relatives and they are always tough because nothing is ever good enough for them. There was a lot of "boo-ing" that night, mostly from me. When there's no reaction from an audience, that's when I pull out the big guns. I show them some skin—that usually gets a rise out of them. Comedy is not always pretty.

Honestly, wouldn't you rather be considered sexy than funny?

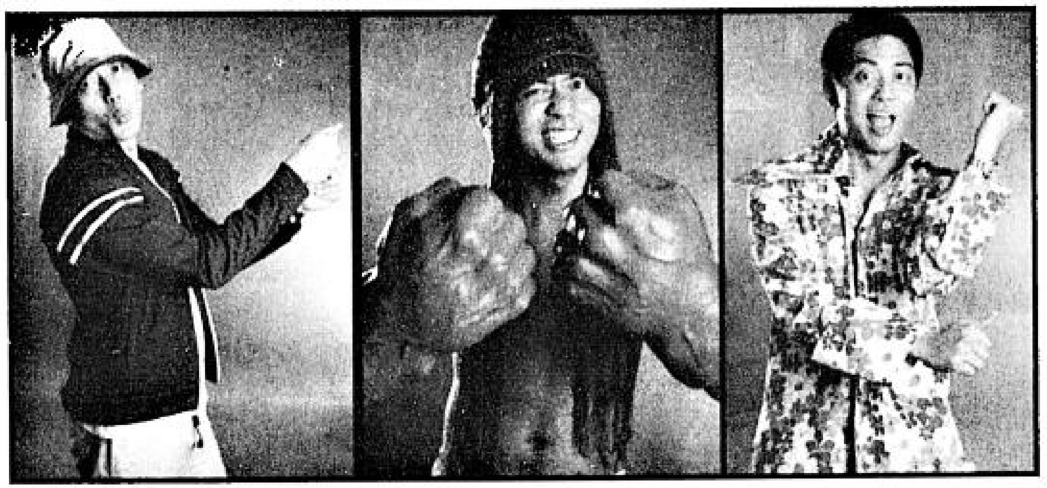
Honestly, I would rather be sexy. Dishonestly, I would still rather be sexy. Sex sells more than comedy. Would you rather watch a hot girl take her clothes off or listen to a dick joke? Hmm ... maybe I should incorporate that into my show.

Speaking of which, ever get an erection while performing?

Yes, once. I was doing my bit on "acapella groups are gay and so is your parish priest" and I noticed this guy in the front row with a huge bulge in his pants and I knew it wasn't a tic-tac in his pocket. He was happy to see me and he had a wide grin to prove it. Normally I take laughter as a good feedback to my jokes but I understood where the guy was coming from. My joke was pretty sensual and I was wearing my skimpy jogging shorts with my pink mid-riff so I was asking for it. Comedians always talk about their first erection but I always thought it would be *my* erection and not from the audience.

I used to shoplift candy as a kid. Ever steal material from other comedians?

It wasn't just candy you shoplifted, was it? You know, shoplifting is just a gateway to more serious crimes like murder, rape, and piracy of Joe Marie Chan's hits. I've never stolen a joke from another comedian! I've stolen some from my Mom, but she's not a comedian; she's decent.



GOOD news folks! The humor was benign.

Elections are coming around. Do you plan to forage for material in that arena? And are you ready to be shot for your craft?

I shy away from political humor for that very reason. I don't want to be shot.

What do you find funnier, politics or religion?

Religion is funnier. Priests are just like stand-up comedians. They stand in front of a mic, tell parables, and get the audience drunk. Their punch lines are just holier.

If, by some magical occurrence, you were given the power to grant enduring world peace, on condition that nothing would ever be funny again, would you do it?

Magical occurrence... well I'll be... you take 'shrooms too? Given a choice between world peace and a funny world, I'd choose, at the expense of letting down Binibining Pilipinas aspirants around the country, funny world. If we had world peace life would be like Sunday mass homily—boring. There'd be no more cutting off people on the road, no more ultimate fighting, and no more waiting outside the studio for those damn talents on Master Showman and beating the hell out of them while they scream, "'Wag po, sir! 'Wag po!" We might as well throw in the towel and let the Jesuits rule the world, which is their true agenda, by the way. Besides, realistically world peace is something we can never achieve. Just like Marc Nelson's abs—everyone wants it but nobody can touch it except Patricia Javier who still hasn't returned my text messages. Damn that star text!

When are you going to get a *real* job?

You mean a job that will put me behind a desk from 8 to 5 doing menial stuff that I know will not change the world while making money so I can buy all these things that I don't really need to impress people that I don't really know and miss out on all the spiritual experiences that joke-telling provides? Uh ... maybe next week.

(Watch for more of Tim Tayag's upcoming accidental adventures by checking out www.timtayag.com.)

Parallel universe

Lemon-aide

Giselle Segovia

SELECTED television programming and days that seemed to stretch forever—this is how I remember Holy Week in my childhood. The only reading material allowed, and highly encouraged, was the encyclopedic "Book of Life" or, even better, the New American Bible which, strangely enough, I and my two brothers have in completely identical copies. Through the years, Filipinos developed new and more ingenious strategies to spend this part of summer.

IBIZARRE. A flurry of DJ events coming your way this Easter

You have to book your flight and lodging way in advance, sometimes even months, should you choose Boracay as your Holy Week destination. Other leading contenders are Baguio and Puerto Galera. But as Bora regulars say, nothing beats the wonder that Boracay offers during this seven-day retreat. Good music and a perfect sunset everyday—there *is* something almost reverential about this scenario

Indeed, Boracay has long established itself as our own little Ibiza, a paradise within reach. In the cult classic film "The Beach," Virginie Ledoyen's character gave a fittingly precise description at the end of the movie when she scribbled on top of their group photograph, "Parallel universe."

No matter how you decide to spend you break, perhaps how it would contribute to your growth as a person should be a deciding factor. You might as well get something apart from the relaxation!

Saturday, April 3

They *do* start young these days. Child prodigy and wonder pianist Ma. Regina Montesclaros will hold a concert at the Francisco Santiago Hall of Equitable PCI Bank, Tower I, Makati Avenue corner H.V. de la Costa Street, Makati City. Listen to the music of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, San Pedro and Kasilag recreated by this little girl's skillful hands. Presented by the Manila Chamber Orchestra Foundation. For tickets, call 878-4358 to 59 or 840-7000 loc. 2630 or 2258.

After the concert, strut over to the NBC Tent for BigFish at MTV Grind featuring Leeroy Thornhill and TC. The Tent is located at the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

If shopping is your thing, head over to The Podium and go crazy at the three-day Summer Sale which started yesterday. The magic words? 70 percent off. And when you're tired from all the splurging, enjoy the music of The Manila Philharmonic Orchestra in a show called, "An Afternoon of Rhythm and Harmony" at 5 p.m. At nine p.m., enjoy original songs by composer Luigi De Dios performed by Romy Jorolan and May Bayot of Acoustic Jive under the musical direction of Gerard Salonga at The Renaissance Project Album Launch.

Sunday, April 4

Celebrate Palm Sunday by catching a screening of "The Passion of the Christ," Mel Gibson's highly critiqued film. Necessary for watching this movie: money for your ticket, Kleenex, and an empty stomach. Some scenes may induce nausea.

The Podium has more music in store for aficionados. Enjoy all-star performances of flutist Jong Cuenco, violinist John Lesaca and sax man Tots Tolentino in a show called On Wind & Strings.

Monday, April 5

Get in the hallow mood—visit the photo exhibit of Neil Daza featuring captured moments and experiences inside churches. *"Ala Una sa Simbahan"* is at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' 4th Floor Hallway Gallery. For more information, call 832-1125 to 39.

Tuesday, April 6

Do you know the song, "Blinded by the Light?" It resounded in my head while viewing the works of brilliant abstractionist Raul Isidro. "Windows" showcases works done predominantly in gold. Get amazingly blinded at the Ricco-Renzo Galleries, G/F IDC Manila, 210 N. Garcia Street, Bel-Air II, Makati City. For more information, call 898-2542, 43 and 45.

Wednesday, April 7

Holiday! It's your last chance to buy out-of-town essentials. Make a list and check it twice!

PHOTO BY ROBBY MANANQUIL

COLOR your world

Thursday, April 8

Sashaying barefoot on the sands of Boracay, make sure that you take on dusk with the "The Real Sunset Sessions" behind you for full, maximum impact. Phil Mison aka Cantoma (UK) and TC (BIGFISH) will be generously providing great beats. Step into the Waling Waling Beach Resort in Boracay. This will run onto the 10th (Saturday).

And then some! The party will surely go on starting because at 10pm, it's "Vibe @ Island Grooves" which is, yes, that's right, Steve Mills in the house! Along with DJ Aryan and DJ Ace. Only your favorite Hiphop beats and the beach right beside you!

Friday, April 9

It's Good Friday. Everyone should save this day for at least some reflection. And this doesn't mean getting friendly with the booze!

Saturday, April 10

Japan's techno ambassador Ken Ishii will share his innovative and experimental style, together with Lenny Ibizarre (Ibiza) in BIGFISH's third year for Slinky World Class 2004. Only at Hey Jude! in Boracay Island. Check out the details for this Easter extravaganza at www.bigfishmanila.com and learn more about Mr. Ishii (who is NOT related to Oren Ishii of Kill Bill) from his site, www.kenishii.com.

Sunday, April 11

Happy Easter! Before coming back to the hectic reality of Manila, your last hurrah is "Sun Sets" a mid-afternoon celebration in praise of the sun by Community. It's a month-long event that will kick off on this day, from 3 to 8 p.m. at the Pearl of the Pacific Resort. Grooves by Chip de la Calzada and Adrian Cuenca.

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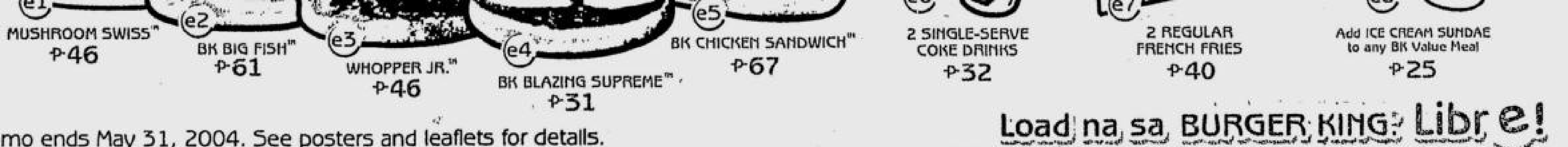

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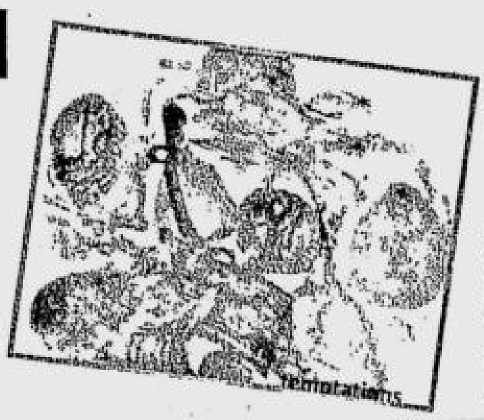
Per DTI-NCR Permit No 1302, Series of 2004

Easter Eggs-travaganzas



BEST COVER OF A HOTEL MAGAZINE. Temptations, photo by Tom Epperson

BEFORE you hie off to some over-populated beach destination or to some obscure location, remember that the best place to be during the Easter season is right here in Manila.

No traffic, no work, no people. Best spot on earth? The Makati Shangri-La offers an Easter egg hunt of surprises all throughout April—temptations that are too hard to resist.

Start with Shang Palace's low calorie feast of gloriously healthy and medicinal food and then indulge with Gourmet Corner's pastry chef Werner Schanzl's crunchy cashew nut chocolate mousse. Enjoy your happy hours with the bands at Conway's Bar, then head off to Red and have a sampling of over 21 tempting cocktails.

DO IT FAST. Have 21 martinis at Red

When you think you've had enough, go up to your room (where a special Easter package is offered until April 12—call the reservations hotline at 814-2525 now) and hug your bed with a smile. The next day, visit Island Café for a hot Easter buffet (from April 8-11) which includes a lineup of Easter delicacies such as the Brioche Easter Bunny, artistically designed eggs and marzipan delights.

So don your bunny ears and tails and hop over!

Tim Yap

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12 13 14 15 16
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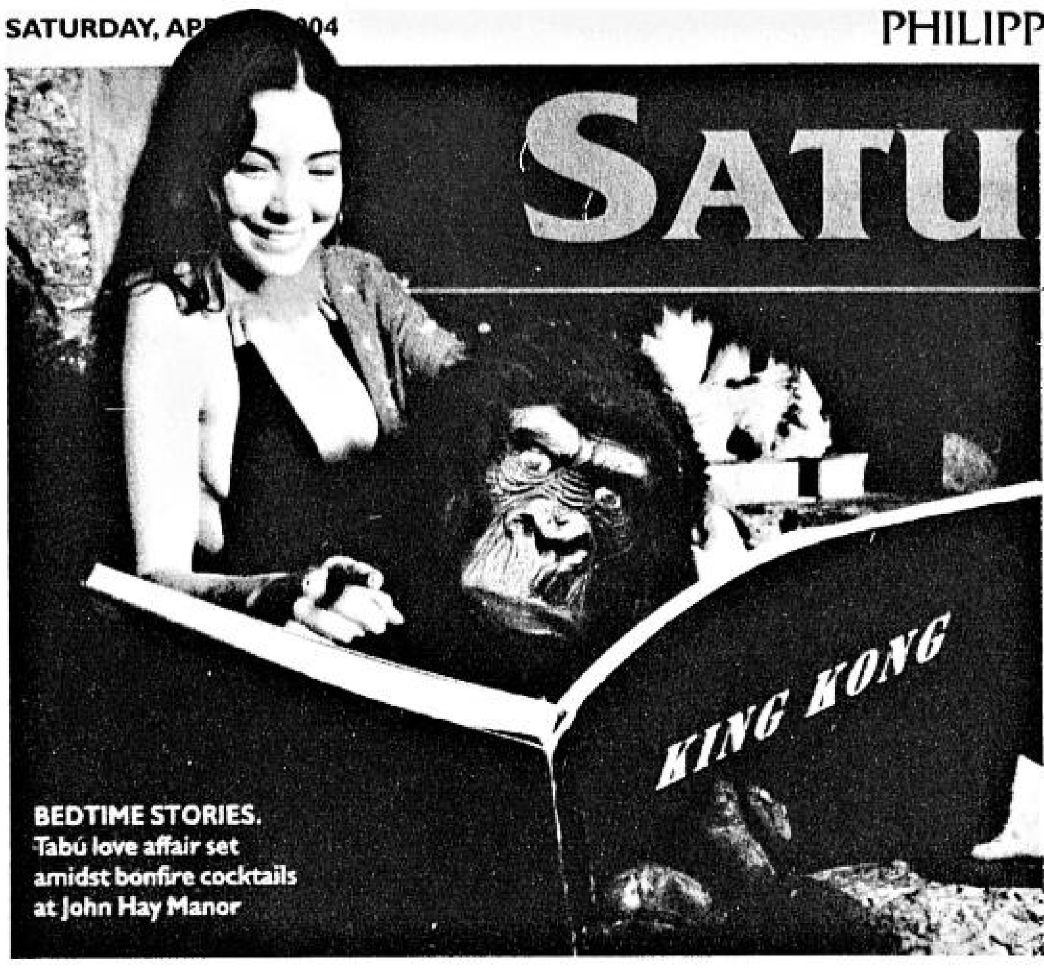


BEDTIME STORIES. Tabú love affair set amidst bonfire cocktails at John Hay Manor

SATURDAY Super

King Kong's courtship

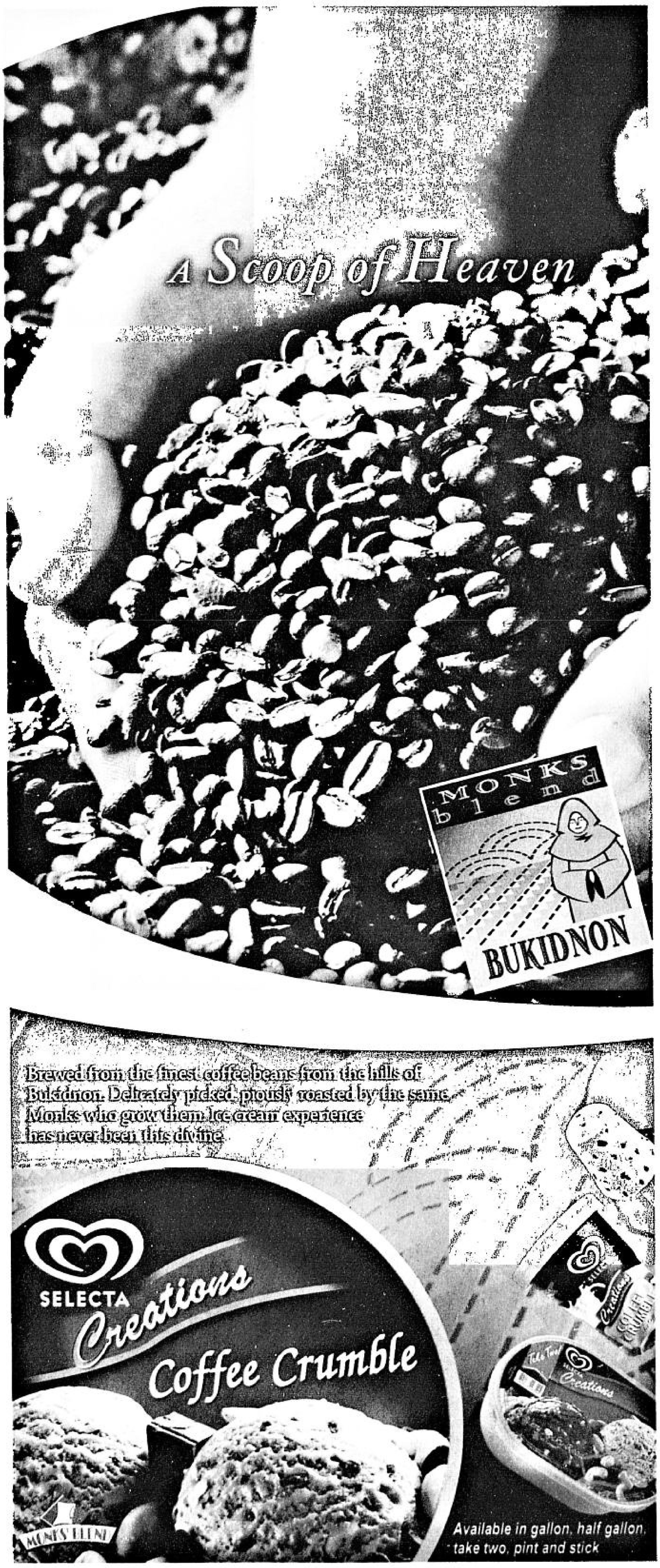
Until now, and in both cinema and real life, the process is fueled by the element of mystery as much as tragedy and romance

By Lino Cayetano

"KING Kong" is a love story and "Beauty and the Beast" is a monster flick.

In the world of make believe, roles change and representations could be both vague and familiar. King Kong could become a romantic and tragic figure while Belle could be a deceiving and monstrous creature. To some, King Kong is simply an outsider trapped in a world that doesn't understand or accept him; and Belle isn't a sweet and innocent girl but

KING KONG'S/ H4



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Promo period is from 24 February 2004 to 31 January 2005. See flyers for more details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0403. Series of 2004.

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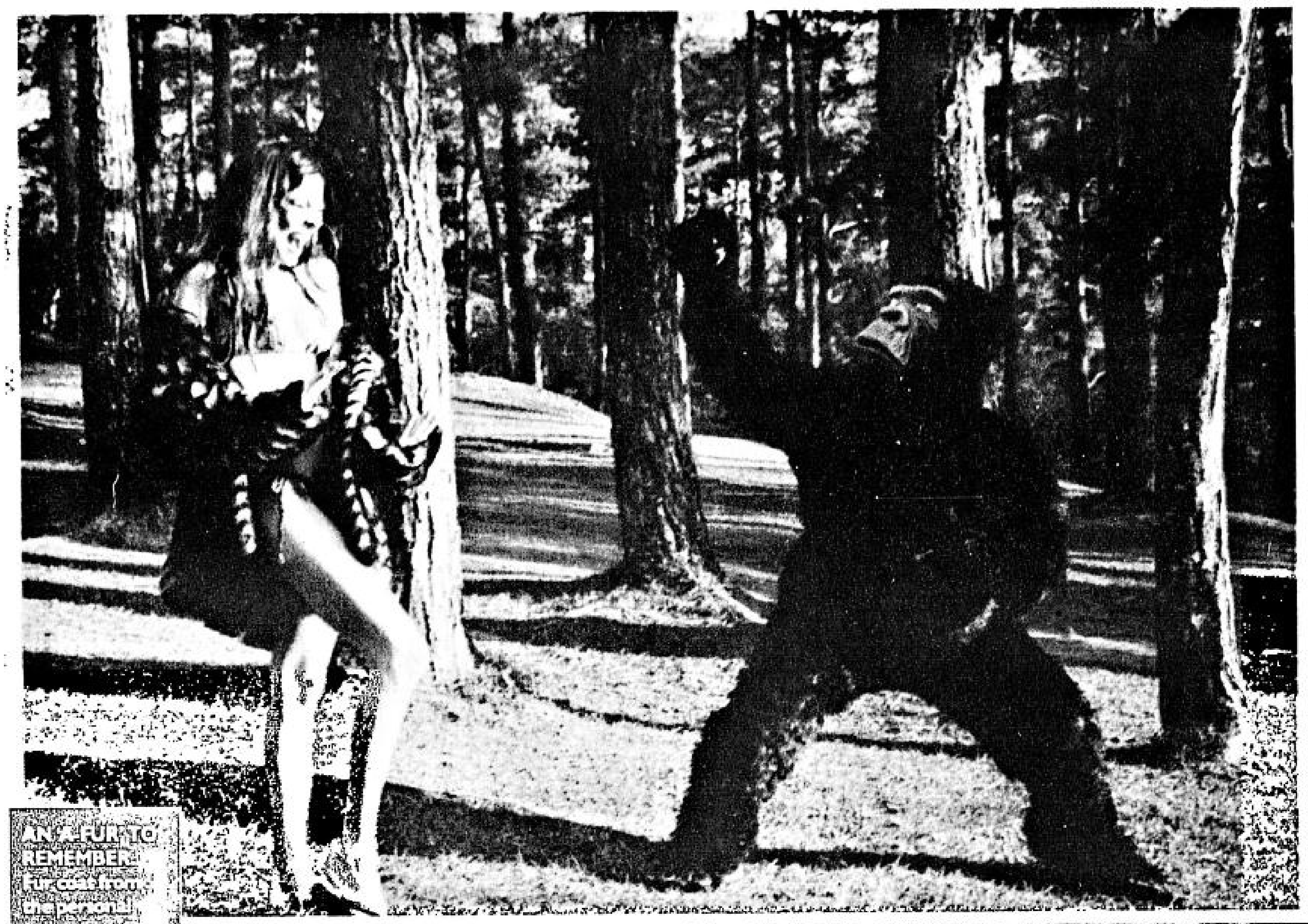
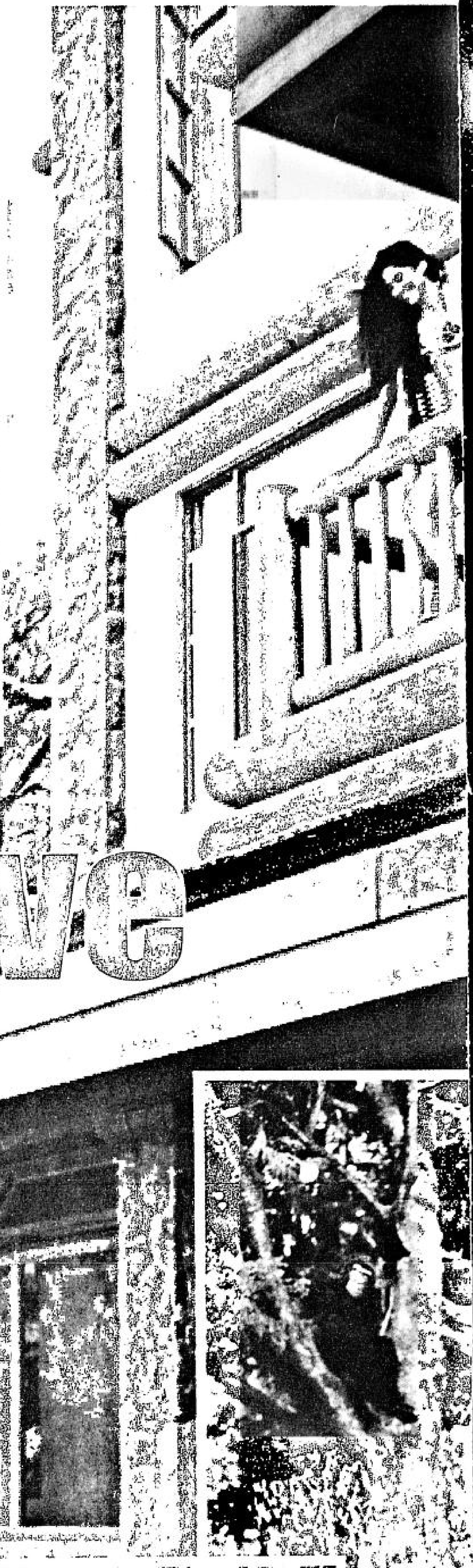


AN A-FUR TO REMEMBER. Fur coat from the personal collection of [illegible]



Animal Love

Tim Yap

TALE as old as time... 'Tabú' as it can be... At Camp John Hay, a love story unfolds between Amanda Griffin and a hairy admirer—let's call him Hairy Sabine.

The courtship begins as Hairy serenades Amanda at John Hay Manor, Amanda's home in Baguio, hoping to woo the bikini-clad beauty with songs like "How Much is that Monkey in the Window," "Simian to Watch Over Me," and several Bananarama hits.

They have special meals prepared by Chef Billy King, favorite of the Kongs—salmon, sea bass, lamb chops, strawberry desserts and other succulent treats that gorillas don't normally eat. Griffin and Sabine develop a relationship through mutual appreciation of pine cones, astronomy and gastronomy.

They take morning jogs around the eco-trail enshrouded in the fog of dawn, a girl and a gorilla in the mist.

One time, Hairy surprises Amanda with a bouquet of flowers illegally picked from the Baguio Botanical Garden. She finds this gesture so sweet, she plants a kiss on his cheek and proceeds to play pin the tail on the donkey-kong.

Then Amanda plays 18 holes of world-class golf (wearing a different Tabu bikini per hole) while Hairy attends to monkey business at the CAP-John Hay Convention Center, since he missed last year's Ad Congress, where apes of all shapes and sizes discussed the future of the animal kingdom.

As a climax to their courtship, the primate and the princess stoke the flames of desire beside a bonfire cocktail in the garden of Eden, watched only by the voyeuristic moon—and me.

Back in the room, Griffin and Sabine cap their summer romance by reading their bedside favorite, "King Kong" while watching Charlton Heston in "Planet of the Apes."

The Baguio gold experience—chill air, the sharp scent of pine, and a love story worthy of National Geographic. Some people may remember Baguio as the country's summer capital, but for these two, it's all about animal instinct.

"Ever just the same, ever a surprise... ever as before, and ever just as sure as the sun will rise...

Certain as the sun, rising in the east, tale as old as time, song as old as rhyme...

Griffin and Sabine."

Produced by TIM YAP
Photography by STEVE TIRONA
Assistants: MARCUS MAGUIGAD and ALBERT GENATO
Styling by GIAN ROMANO
Models: AMANDA GRIFFIN and VERNON PEREZ
Make up by YZA PALMERO of Shu Uemura
Location: John Hay Manor, Camp John Hay
Special thanks to Boots Moyer and Camp John Hay

THAT'S NOT THE APE OF MY HEART. Pant jacket by Joey Samson to order 0927-3198129

WHAT A FEELING!

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GODDESS ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP. Robe by Ivarluski Aseron to order 0927 2736583

INTO THE WOODS. Blue jacket by Joey Samson

ALL SWIMWEAR BY TABU
D AT GREENBELT SHOPPING PLAZA
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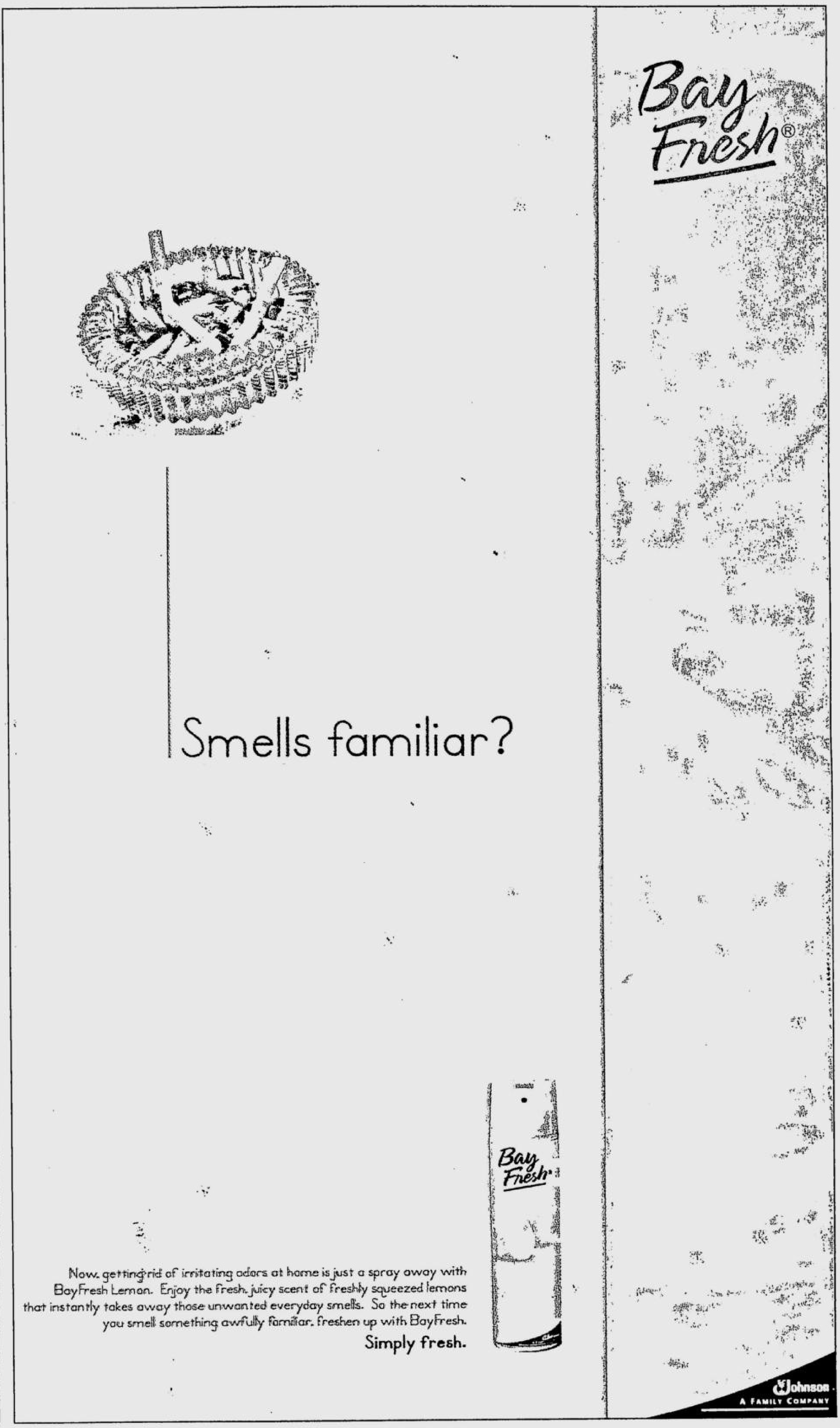

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King Kong's courtship

From page H1

an embodiment of the monster in all of us who pre-judges the cursed, and yet to be transformed, prince.

Characters in fictional film and television are meant to portray and exude certain qualities that help the narrative weave a story while going through the requisite beginning (exposition), middle (conflict) and end (resolution). But in many cases, the characters take on a life of their own and become interesting and important study in themselves.

In human relationships, roles are often assigned but not always accepted. In the particular process of courtship, roles could shift countless times. The monkey who is courting you now becomes the king you shower with gifts tomorrow. The princess you pursued in the past 12 months becomes the pest you can't get out of your hair.

Courtship in both cinema and real life often transcends characters and roles. The gorgeous socialite could fall for the reclusive artist, the reckless womanizer could be tamed upon meeting his match, and two people so different on the surface could open up and discover that they are actually very much alike. The process opens doors of thought and feeling. It could elicit emotions and become a key to discovering your own character.

No right or wrong

In "Beauty and the Beast," the Beast traps Belle in his mansion but slowly realizes that only in setting her free will he truly win her heart. King Kong picks up a beautiful woman while aggressively defending himself from people trying to capture or kill him. The woman, at first frightened, becomes endeared to him just seconds before he is shot and falls to his death.

Like in cinema, there is no right or wrong way to go about a courtship; a certain mystery envelops the whole process. In the film "An Affair to Remember," two people steeped in other relationships meet on a cruise and go through a courtship in which fate assures them that they are meant for each other. But if you subscribe to the film's premise, there is no guarantee, either, that the two will not fall in love with other people later on.

Courtship has long been the subject of the most interesting studies in both cinema and real life. For an accurate analysis, methods and strategies have been laid down and battle plans have been drawn for centuries. Yet the process, until now, is fueled by the element of mystery, as much as tragedy and romance.

Like characters in a movie, local cinema and television is in a continuous courtship with the viewing public. Rival networks and movie companies compete on a daily basis. In particular moments, when a hit show or blockbuster movie emerges, the courtship stops. Someone has captured the heart of the public. Trust is established, and a relationship is formed. Yet the question remains for the Filipino viewing public … is it true love? Or will they soon turn into monsters? They often do. And the courtship begins all over again.

SOMEWHERE down the road

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See flyers for details
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1492, Series of 2004

SATURDAY Super 3

SUPERFRIENDS

Operation: Summer Storm

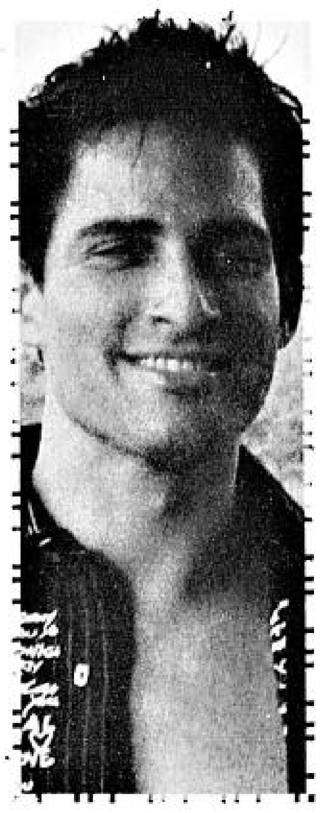
SUMMER is a battle waged between the forces of lethargy and action. Some consider the season as synonymous with vacation, a time to relax on the hammock with a hefty book, or escape to a beach of teal and ivory, or simply to vegetate in the satisfaction of not having to do anything at all. Others utilize the summer months with the same vigor and zeal that the rest of the year has demanded from them. Whatever your summer feels like—a chill-out zone or a fever of activity—trust in Super! to be supplying you with the necessary artillery to be fighting the good fight, and coming out triumphant.

E-mail your thoughts, suggestions, criticisms and congratulations to super@inquirer.com.ph.

HEY there! My name is Ryan Katz. My battle plan for the summer consists hanging out in the mountains. My weapon of choice is a Scotch, and I can be found contemplating world domination at home with my friends. Enlist at burntdry@hotmail.com.

HEY there! My name is Audrey Carpio. My battle plan for the summer consists of checking out Grad school, if not, then Boracay. My weapon of choice is a Caipirinha, and I can be found contemplating world domination at the V-Bar in Sydney. Enlist at audreycarpio@yahoo.com.

HEY there! My name is Jenie Manuel. My battle plan for the summer consists of going to Europe and soaking myself with love under the Eiffel Tower. My weapon of choice is a San Miguel beer, and I can be found contemplating world domination at Hey Jude, Boracay. Enlist at jenie_manuel@yahoo.com.



HEY there! My name is Matt Hadfield. My battle plan for the summer consists of working around Asia. My weapon of choice is a Petron Vodka, and I can be found contemplating world domination at Absinth. Enlist at hadmattfiel@hotmail.com.

HEY there! My name is Karen Grupp. My battle plan for the summer consists of conquering Bali! My weapon of choice is a Vodka Sprite, and I can be found contemplating world domination at Azzurro. Enlist at kjvgrupp@yahoo.com.

HEY there! My name is Francesco Lops. My battle plan for the summer consists of party, party and party! My weapon of choice is a Campari Soda, and I can be found contemplating world domination at Nuvo. Enlist at francesco_lops@yahoo.com.

In Tune with April

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THE MANILA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA • 5PM

THE RENAISSANCE PROJECT
ALBUM LAUNCH • 9PM
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GERARD SALONGA - MUSICAL DIRECTOR
ROMY JOROLAN
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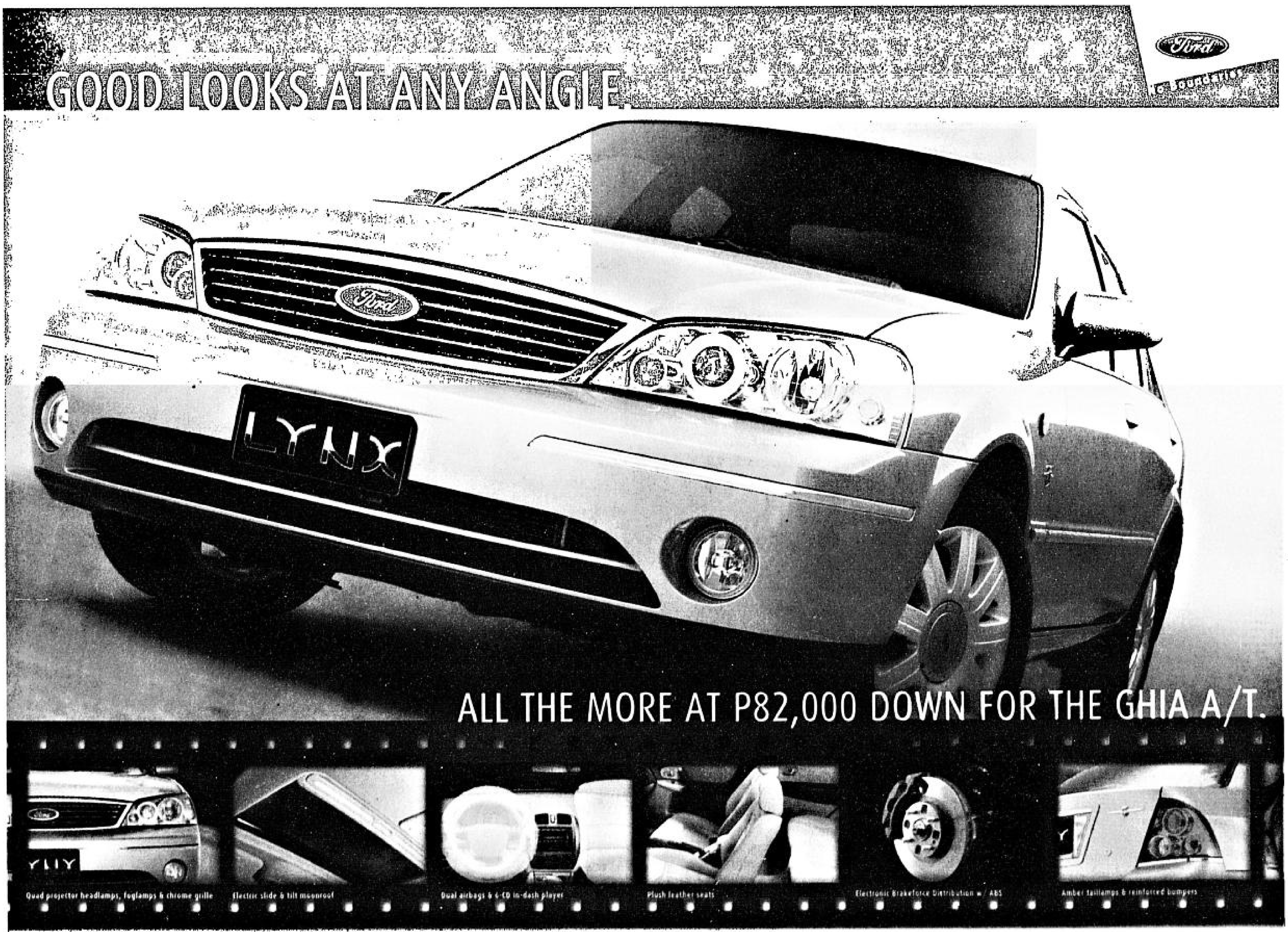
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Goodbye Pale Pedro!

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Paolo Pineda
Grooming by Teddy Mendoza

PALE Pedro needs to get dark.

His friends keep telling him to spend more time in the sun. But Pedro is not stupid.

He knows only the insane would let themselves be baked by that torturous globe of fire. He's read articles about what UV rays can do to the skin.

Nothing pretty, definitely.

He'd rather be Pale Pedro than Fried Pedro, that's for sure.

So he sat in his room for days on end, forlornly gazing at his pasty skin.

Until a friend-slash-fairy-godmother dragged him to a clinic for a Quicktan treatment.

A graphic artist airbrushed his entire body with Dihyroxyacetone, an FDA-approved colorless sugar used in most tanning products.

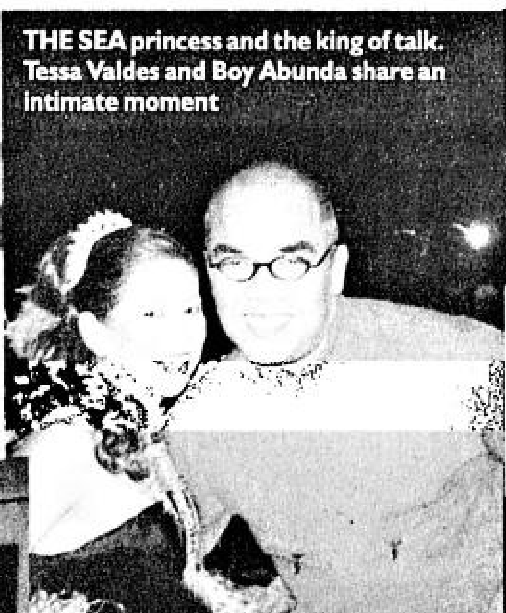
And when the process was over, he stared at the mirror and growled.

Goodbye, Pale Pedro. Hello, Luscious Tan.

For information about the Quicktan treatment, visit www.belomed.com, e-mail belomed@pacific.net.ph or call 8177178 or 8179283.

TAN-TALIZING TAN-TRICITY. Carlo Maceda goes from Pale Pedro to Luscious Tan

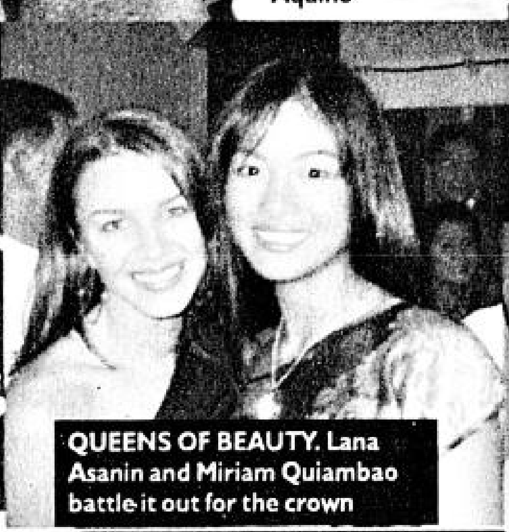
THE BUZZ on Karylle, ZsaZsa Padilla and Kris Aquino



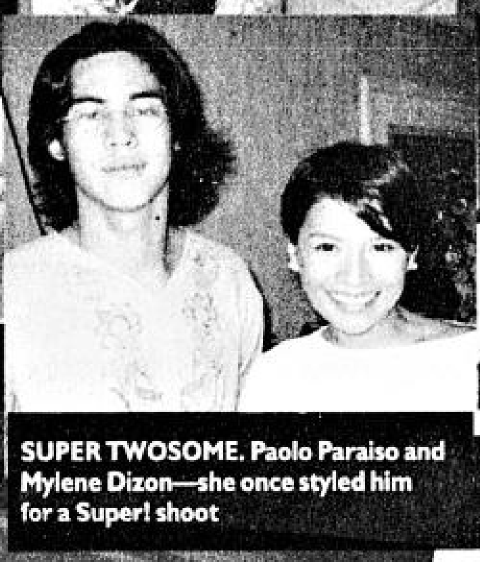
THE SEA princess and the king of talk. Tessa Valdes and Boy Abunda share an intimate moment

BROADCAST LOVE AFFAIR. Julius Babao and Tintin Bersola

BELO-PHILES UNITE! Juddha Paolo and Baron Geisler lead the rally



QUEENS OF BEAUTY. Lana Asanin and Miriam Quiambao battle it out for the crown



SUPER TWOSOME. Paolo Paraiso and Mylene Dizon—she once styled him for a Super! shoot

NO TO CLONING. Leizl Martinez and her Mini-Mes

NOT JUST a pretty face. Heart Evangelista exuding her usual sweetness

OUT IN the open. Jomari Yllana and Ara Mina spotted together

ANOTHER feather in his multi-awarded cap. Direk Albert Martinez at the helm of Belo's Skin launch.

FASHION and showbiz fusion from the author and Iza Calzado

CES LA VIE! Sexy and sassy broadcast journalist Ces Oreña-Drilon

BOY TROY. Hunky heartthrob Troy Montero

VA-VA-VIXEN. Dr. Vicki Belo, doctor to the stars, the rich and the famous and everybody else at the launch of her Skin flick—a new magazine devoted to beauty

A toast to Dr. Vicki's mission of 'making the Filipino people beautiful, one person at a time'

Venus D' Belo

Text and photos by Bianca Valerio
Contributor

THE LOST City of Atlantis, found. That's what I thought when Melo's Restaurant was transformed into a Grecian-inspired palace not only to celebrate the 14th anniversary of the Belo Medical Group but also to unveil Dr. Vicki Belo's latest venture, the Philippines' first magazine on skin and body care simply called, SKIN.

Belo's "Midas touch" has changed lives It was inevitable that she would come out with this magazine, which managing editor Liane Bautista considers "the beauty bible."

For the masquerade party, the guests were given beautifully designed masks at the entrance.

The production was directed by Albert Martinez. Butterfly-adorned dancers enclosed in the restaurant's indoor glass garden set the mood. Guests enjoyed the sumptuous food while awaiting the arrival of their hostess for the evening. Next, all eyes were directed to the audio visual presentation entitled, "Venus d' Belo," which thoroughly and artistically explained the various services that the Belo Medical Group has been known for, plus the upcoming technology in cosmetic surgery and dermatology. Also, proofs of the clinic's achievements came in the form of testimonials by famous male and female clients, like Joyce Jimenez, Iza Calzado, Miriam Quiambao, and Albert Martinez.

Belo's entrance was anything but ordinary. Escorted by an entourage of gorgeous Adonis', her hot pink ensemble accentuated her svelte figure. Photographers pushed and shoved to get the best shots. Soon enough, I realized why everyone is drawn to this woman. Aside from her expertise, her grace and charm, not to mention her sex appeal, work like magnets.

Special premier issue

The show was hosted by Boy Abunda. Everyone was ushered out to the courtyard, in front of a stage outlined by towering Greek columns from end to end. The dancers performed a skin-baring number. Publisher Dondi Almario, managing editor Liane Bautista, photographer Rene Mejias, and Belo formally launched SKIN with the premier issue, a double-cover special featuring sexy siren Angela

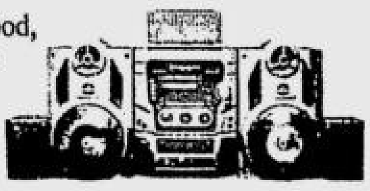
Velez, back-to-back with breathless beauty Aubrey Miles, who was asked to lead the toast, to Belo's "contribution to the task of making the Filipino people beautiful, one person at a time." There was an endless flow of champagne, and then fireworks.

As an all-star cast was called onstage, the Belo Family of Stars joining the famed dermatologist in commemorating the momentous event while her parents Ike and Nena Belo were proudly watched from afar. Belo's son, film director Quark Henares, could not have been more elated.

HOT SUMMER SAVINGS AT
SM CITY MANILA AND SM CITY BICUTAN

The heat continues with the Super Mallwide Sale happening this time at SM City Manila and SM City Bicutan. Shoppers are invited to enjoy a weekend of great bargains and prizes to be raffled off on April 2, 3 and 4.

WHAT'S HOT IN MANILA



From funky fashion to heavenly food, there's something for everyone at **SM CITY MANILA.** The mall also houses novelty shops and specialty stores that cater to the young and the young at heart!

Join the City Manila's super mallwide raffle and get a chance to win one of eight (8) LG DVD HOME CINEMA SYSTEMS.

LG Life's Good

Every P300 single purchase (cash or charge) from any participating mall establishments (food and non-food) entitles you to one raffle coupon. Plus, more chances to join with these offers:

- **SM FOODCOURT** One(1) raffle coupon for every P150 single purchase.
- **SM CINEMA** One(1) raffle coupon for every four(4) single purchase of cinema tickets
- **AMUSEMENT CENTERS** One (1) raffle coupon for every P100 single purchase of tickets / tokens.

Promo period is from April 2 to 4, 2004

Deadline for submission of entries is at 10 pm of April 4, 2004.

Draw Date and Venue: April 4, Sunday 10:15 pm at the Mall Atrium or Activity Area

SHOP & WIN

SUPER mallwide SALE

Apr 2 • 3 • 4

up to 50% off

on great selections

Win exciting prizes in our raffle draw

from: LG Life's Good

SM City MANILA

SM City BICUTAN

mall hours: **10**am – **10**pm

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1326, Series of 2004

AT SM CITY BICUTAN

Experience the shopping and dining delights of **SM CITY BICUTAN!** Find a wide range of fashion and specialty shops and fastfood restos. Visit the popular Super SM Hypermarket and load up your shopping cart with discounts.

LG Life's Good

Get a chance to take home one of the **six (6) 13.1 cu. ft. LG Ice Beam Door Cooling Refrigerators.**

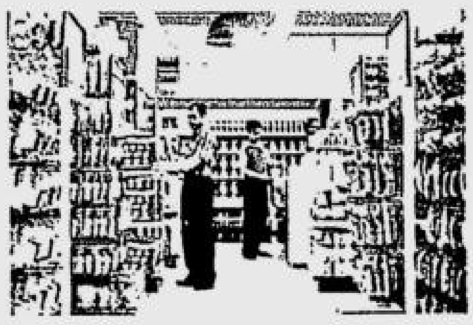
Every P300 single purchase (cash or charge) from any participating mall establishments (food and non-food) entitles you to one raffle coupon.

Purchases made from SM Department Store, SM Supermarket and SM Hypermarket are not qualified to join the raffle promo.

Promo Period is from April 2 to 4, 2004

Draw Date is on April 4, Sunday at 10:15 pm

MORE SHOPPING VALUES



Check out **ACE HARDWARE** at SM City Manila and SM City Bicutan and enjoy great markdowns during the weekend sale! Meanwhile at **SM FOODCOURT** the Coke Ko 'to, Meal Ko 'to, Prize Ko 'to! offers exciting happenings.

SM FOODCOURT

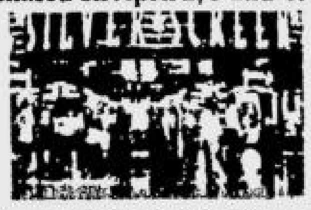
A minimum P50 purchase plus any Coca Cola product at SM Foodcourt entitles the customer to join the Beat Match Game at the designated Coke booth.

Win premium Coke items instantly! Also, get a chance to win FREE Merienda Meals from SM Foodcourt, FREE Movie Cards from SM Cinema and FREE Rides from Storyland. Also FREE Game Coupons from Grandslam Shoot-outs!

Customer gets FREE collectible Coke tumblers for upsizing of Coke drinks.

MOVIES IN THE CITY

See the latest flicks at the SM CINEMA during the weekend sale and **Get FREE Movie Pass with every three (3) Movie Tickets purchased on April 2, 3 and 4.**



Also get FREE Popcorn for every two (2) Large Softdrinks.

SUPERFRIENDS

Operation: Summer Storm

HEY there! My name is Anja Chua. My battle plan for the summer consists of going home to Cebu. My weapon of choice is a Malibu Pineapple, and I can be found contemplating world domination at Nuvo. Enlist at anjachua777@yahoo.com.

HEY there! My name is Zane Fansler. My battle plan for the summer consists of saurfing. My weapon of choice is Scotch, and I can be found contemplating world domination at the beach.

HEY there! My name is Sandra Romero Ruiz. My battle plan for the summer consists of hanging out in Malate, getting a tan, meeting guys. My weapon of choice is a Martini Bianco with two spanish olives, and I can be found contemplating world domination at a bar near you. Enlist at shandra100@hotmail.com.

HEY there! My name is Ricardo Garcia. My battle plan for the summer consists of growing sugar (ed.—haha!). My weapon of choice is Scotch, and I can be found contemplating world domination at Capone's.

HEY there! My name is Jon Mullaly. My battle plan for the summer consists of scouting out Boracay for the first time. My weapon of choice is a Brandy Coke, and I can be found contemplating world domination at Temple. Enlist at jonmullaly@yahoo.com

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METROBANK

MTAP-DepEd MATH CHALLENGE

"Moving forward through excellence in Mathematics"

From Top left to right, Grade 6 1st Place Winner (Individual Competition) Hykinel Bon D. Guarte; 4th year 1st Place Winner (Individual Competition) Maria Romina L. Dingal. Grade 6 1st Place Winners (Team Competition) Stephanie Anne A. Oliveros & Jomo-Vitto C. Simbul; 4th yr. 1st Place Winners (Team Competition) William Bryan L. Chiong & David Joseph N. Tan

Enjoying Math

While kids their age can be found in arcades or glued to the TV set, these amazing youngsters are getting their kicks the unusual way: solving math problems and journeying with other kids into the world of equations and variables and permutations.

Achieving Wonders

Can you identify the three smallest prime numbers whose sum is also a prime number in under five seconds? If not, then you don't stand a chance against these math wizards at the Grade VI level!

Conquering Odds

In besting almost 240,000 elementary and high school students from both public and private schools nationwide, the latest batch of winners in the Metrobank Math Challenge not only proved their worth against equally talented competitors, but defied personal limitations to emerge as champions after a rigorous series of elimination rounds.

In an effort to help encourage interest in numbers, the Metrobank Math Challenge makes learning mathematics fun and rewarding. Aside from unraveling the potentials in mathematics of Filipino children, however, the Metrobank Match Challenge also provides them with an opportunity to imbibe values crucial to the formation of the next generation of Filipinos: discipline, hard work, team effort. As Filipinos of the future, they represent our best hope for our resurgence in the global marketplace of human resources.

To all the winners of the 2004 Metrobank Math Challenge, congratulations and best wishes!

You're in good hands with
METROBANK

You are made to excel!
METROBANK FOUNDATION, INC.
Member: League of Corporate Foundations, Inc.

METROBANK-MTAP-DepEd MATH CHALLENGE

NATIONAL WINNERS

Grade 6 Individual Competition
1st Place HYKINEL BON D. GUARTE
Coach: Mr Ronilo E. Lascano
Sorsogon Pilot Elementary School
Sorsogon City –
Region V
2nd Place ALMER T. MACAHILO
Coach: Mr Jonathan C. Gloral
West Visayas State University
Iloilo City -
Region VI
3rd Place LADY CHRISTINE C. CRUZ
Coach: Mrs. Sheila L. Juniosa
New Era Elementary School
Quezon City, NCR

Grade 6 Team Competition
1st Place STEPHANIE ANNE A. OLIVEROS & JOMO-VITTO C. SIMBUL
Coach: Mrs. Linda C. Naputo
De La Salle Santiago Zobel School,
Muntinlupa City – NCR
2nd Place TRIXIA MARIE S. EBOL & CHINMARY ROSE G. RIVERA
Coach: Mr Ephraim Pidut
Dadiangas West Central Elementary School, General Santos City
Region XII
3rd Place ALMER T. MACAHILO & JOHN SEN G. MACAINAN
Coach: Mr Genesis G. Camarista
West Visayas State University,
Iloilo City, Region VI

4Th Year Individual Competition
1st Place MARIA ROMINA L. DINGAL
Coach: Mrs. Thelma T. Villaluna
Quezon City Science High School
Quezon City – NCR
2nd Place WILLIAM BRYAN L. CHIONG
Coach: Mr. Samuel G. Gayangos
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City - Region IX
3rd Place MARLON LOUIE T. MANALO
Coach: Mr. Oscar A. Honorario
Davao Christian High School
Davao City - Region XI

4Th Year Team Competition
1st Place WILLIAM BRYAN L. CHIONG & DAVID JOSEPH N. TAN
Coach: Mr. Samuel G. Gayangos
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City - Region IX
2nd Place IMMANUEL NICK R. SUAREZ & ANNALYN G. SANTOS
Coach: Mrs. Maria Victoria Serra
Makati Science High School,
Makati City – NCR
3rd Place JOAN KARLA L. MACADANGDANG & ROBINSON F. GO
Coach: Ms. Medenia C. Egasan
Philippine Science High School – Southern Mindanao, Davao City -
Region XI

REGIONAL WINNERS - Individual Competition

GRADE SIX
Region 1
DEAN MARIONI GALAPON
Mother Goose Special School
Dagupan City
Region 2
JOHN LEONARD G. UY
School of the Future*
Tuguegarao City
Region 4-A
JESSA MARIE U. SILVA
Tangway Elementary School*
Lipa City
Region4-B
SHANE ANN BALLELOS
Sta. Cruz South Central School
Sta. Cruz, Marinduque
Region5
HYKINEL BON D. GUARTE
Sorsogon Pilot Elementary School*
Sorsogon City
Region6
ALMER T MACAHILO
West Visayas State University*
Iloilo City
Region7
FEBBY T. DIABORDO
Dumaguete Science Elementary School
Dumaguete City
Region8
GERRY A. MAUREAL
Macrohon Central Elementary School
Southern Leyte
Region9
SIGRID MARIANNE P. GAYANGOS
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City
Region10
LEANDRO T. ISLA
Iligan City East Elementary School
Iligan City
Region11
FLOYDDAN A. SOLOMON
Rizal Elementary School*
Panabo City
Region12
TRISTAN MARVIN UY
Cotabato City Institute
Cotabato City
CARAGA
SAN BARNEY M. AGBAYANI
John Bosco College
Bislig City
CAR
GERVIN Y. WONG
Benguet Special Educational Center*
La Trinidad, Benguet
NCR
LADY CHRISTINE C. CRUZ
New Era Elementary School*
Quezon City

FOURTH YEAR
Region 1
ANNA KRISTINE IBAÑEZ
Regional Science High School
Bangar, La Union
Region 2
MAR ANDRES C. BAQUIRAN III
Regional Science High School*
Tumauini, Isabela
Region 4-A
PAUL JETHRO D. UY
Gumaca National High School*
Gumaca, Quezon
Region 4-B
ERIK JOHN C. ESTRADA
Marinduque National High School
Boac, Marinduque
Region5
MARVIN L. SAMAÑIEGO
University of Saint Anthony*
Iriga City
Region6
ED ANGELO C. BAYAG
Philippine Science High School – Western Visayas*
Iloilo City
Region7
RAYVEN N. INGLES
Tagbilaran City Science High School
Tagbilaran City
Region8
JOSHUA D. BERESO
New Ormoc City National High School*
Ormoc City
Region9
WILLIAM BRYAN L. CHIONG
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School*
Zamboanga City
Region10
LETICIA SEY OH
Kong Hua High School
Cagayan de Oro City
Region11
MARLON LOUIE T. MANALO
Davao Christian High School*
Davao City
Region12
FASL GOLDANNE B. BUENAFLOR
Albert Einstein School
Cotabato City
CARAGA
IRENE A. FABREGAS
Jacinto P. Elpa National High School
Surigao del Sur
CAR
CARL CLESTER D. ABAD
Cordillera Regional Science High School*
Baguio City
NCR
MARIA ROMINA L. DINGAL
Quezon City Science High School*
Quezon City

REGIONAL WINNERS - Team Competition

GRADE SIX
Region 1
JANELLE AIRA CORPUS
JULIAN LEE DULAY
BHC Educational Institution Incorporated
La Union
Region 2
CHERRILYN DUCAY
DAN SILVINO CAMBRI
Alibago Elementary School
Cagayan
Region 4-A
PHOEBE LOIS G. MARTINEZ
LALAINE A. MALALUAN
San Pedro Central School*
San Pedro, Laguna
Region 4-B
SHEIKA MAY ESTORIA
JOEL IAN D. ESPENILLA
San Jose Pilot Elementary School
Occidental Mindoro
Region 5
JONAS ROMEO T. SABAREZA
LAARNI ANTHONETTE R. LAYSON
Salle Learning Center*
Polangui, Albay
Region 6
ALMER T. MACAHILO
JOHN SEN G. MACAINAN
West Visayas State University*
Iloilo City
Region 7
GLICERIO P. ROSALES
LOUIS ARIEL O. GO
Science and Technology Education Center
Lapu-Lapu City
Region 8
ANTHONY AEXAN SEPEDA
MICHAEL ANGELO O. VIRDUO
Calbayog Pilot Central School
Calbayog City
Region 9
SIGRID MARIANNE P. GAYANGOS
ANGELO MIGUEL NATIVIDAD
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
Zamboanga City
Region 10
STEFANI NICOLE D. ALCONTAR
PAULIN BLAISE ZHARENA O. ROXAS
Corpus Christi School
Cagayan de Oro City
Region 11
KEVIN C. TEMEW
RAPHAEL RANDOLF GO
Davao Christian High School
Davao City
Region 12
TRIXIA MARIE S. EBOL
CHINMARY ROSE G. RIVERA
Dadiangas West Central Elementary School*
General Santos City
CARAGA
SAN BARNEY M. AGBAYANI
JAMES KEEN PAMONAG
John Bosco College, Bislig City
CAR
MARTIN ROY NABUS
DECKER SORIA
Star Educational Christian Foundation, Benguet
NCR
STEPHANIE ANNE A. OLIVEROS
JOMO-VITTO C. SIMBUL
De La Salle Santiago Zobel School*
Muntinlupa City

FOURTH YEAR
Region 1
ROGER JOHN E. RAGASA
JURIEL R. TACUD
Ilocos Sur National High School*
Vigan City
Region 2
VICTOR TONDO, JR.
JAYSON B. TACAZON
Cagayan National High School*
Tuguegarao City
Region 4-A
JO MAR T. PENARANDA
ALVARO INOCIAN
Antipolo National High School
Antipolo City
Region 4-B
JULIUS CARL A. YGAR
JAYSON CHORESCA
Occidental Mindoro National High School, Occidental Mindoro
Region 5
MARTIN L. SAMANIEGO
EDWARD T. BERMIDO*
University of Saint Anthony*
Iriga City
Region 6
ED ANGELO C. BAYAG
JESSICA MAE E. GO
Philippine Science High School – Western Visayas*, Iloilo City
Region 7
MARK BALDWIN B. MARTINEZ
DOM ANTONOINE B. FORTIN
Dumaguete RTPM Region VII Science High School*
Dumaguete City
Region 8
JOSHUA D. BERESO
CHERRY D. POTOY
New Ormoc City National High School
Ormoc City
Region 9
DAVID JOSEPH N. TAN
WILLIAM BRYAN L. CHIONG
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School*
Zamboanga City
Region 10
OLIVER MICHAEL L. CHING
JUSTIN LUKE D. YAP
Oro Christian Grace School*
Cagayan de Oro City
Region 11
JOAN KARLA L. MACADANGDANG
ROBINSON F. GO
Philippine Science High School-Southern Mindanao*, Davao City
Region 12
FASL GOLDANNE B. BUENAFLOR
DATU EM IBN SAUD C. SINSUAT
Albert Einstein School*, Cotabato City
CARAGA
LUA WRESTLER B. PANCITO
JAMES L. DIGOL
Caraga Regional Science High School*
Surigao City
CAR
MELVIN DY
ALENA MAE FLORA
Baguio City National High School
Baguio City
NCR
IMMANUEL NICK R. SUAREZ
ANNALYN G. SANTOS
Makati Science High School*
Makati City

** National Finalist*